



# HIT LIST

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# ANTI<sup>•</sup>SEEN



**PLUS:** CULT WARS, PART 2 • THE SWINGIN' UTTERS  
WANDA CHROME AND THE LEATHER PHAROAHS  
THE GIZMOS • THE SPITFIRES  
OXYMORON • THE 440's  
**AND** THE USUAL CAST OF MISCREANTS!





In the last issue of *Hit List* (vol. 2, no. 4), we published the first installment of our projected two-part series dealing with the contemporary "Cult Wars". One of the main purposes of that initial installment was to lay the groundwork for a more detailed discussion and analysis of the underlying agendas of certain key figures and organizations that are actively taking part in the current debates about so-called "New Religious Movements" (NRMs). It should be emphasized, however, that the motives of most of the participants in these debates are reasonably transparent. For example, activists affiliated with the evangelical "counter-cult movement" (CCM) are typically seeking to defend Judeo-Christian religious orthodoxy and, in the process, preserve moral "purity" (as they define it); those associated with the secularized "anti-cult movement" (ACM) are seeking to warn others of the dangers that thought-reform cults pose to individual cult members and society at large, whether these cults be religious, therapeutic, political, or hybrid groups; those affiliated with NRMs, in order to forestall further social stigmatization and outright political repression, are endeavoring to portray themselves as innocent truth-seekers who are being unjustifiably subjected to religious, social, or political persecution; and those academic social scientists who defend NRMs against all criticism, however justified, typically claim to be doing so in order to defend religious freedom or preserve fundamental constitutional rights. Although there are surely people with hidden personal motives or disguised ideological agendas operating within all four of the above groups, most of those involved in the often heated debates about NRMs are essentially what they appear to be.

However, this does not appear to be true of Massimo Introvigne, one of the most sophisti-

cated and intelligent of today's "cult apologists".(1) Nor, by extension, is it true of the important international organization he heads, the Turin-based Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni (CESNUR: Center for the Study of New Religions).(2) On the surface, Introvigne is merely one of the most prolific, wide-ranging, and interesting of the intellectuals who have in recent years made a career out of defending NRMs, including those with authoritarian agendas, transgressive rituals, paranoid millenarian fantasies, harsh social control mechanisms, and violent proclivities. If one were to read only his scholarly publications devoted to NRMs, one could easily get the impression that Introvigne is an extreme civil libertarian, a remarkably tolerant liberal, and perhaps even a countercultural bohemian or decadent libertine. (See, for example, his "Satanism Scares and Vampirism", which he presented to the 1997 World Dracula Congress in Los Angeles!) As it turns out, however, nothing could be further from the truth.

Who, then, is Massimo Introvigne, and what accounts for his ongoing campaign against cult critics of every stripe? Introvigne was born in Rome on 14 June 1955, but his family is Piedmontese and he has lived in Turin for most of his life. As a teenager he was an activist in the rightist Fronte Monarchico Giovanile (FMG: Monarchist Youth Front), which was itself affiliated with the Unione Monarchica Italiana (UMI: Italian Monarchist Union). He then joined the ultratraditionalist Alleanza Cattolica (AC: Catholic Alliance) group and soon became one of its cell leaders (*capocroci*). Early on he wrote pseudonymous articles for the rightist weekly *Il Borghese*, the mouthpiece of the conservative "double-breasted suit" faction within the neo-fascist electoral party, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI: Italian Social Movement).(3) During that period he was also

an admirer of the intransigent ultratraditionalist French bishop Marcel Lefebvre, who was so overtly resistant to the process of liberalization and modernization initiated by Pope John XXIII during the Vatican II Council that he was eventually excommunicated from the Catholic Church.(4) When this final break between Lefebvre and the Church hierarchy occurred, both AC and Introvigne (who had spent time at Lefebvre's seminary at Ecône) prudently decided to adopt an "entrism" strategy in order to influence the Church "from within" rather than openly breaking with it and joining Lefebvre's *Fraternité Sacerdotale de Saint-Pio X* and other so-called *sede vacante* ("vacant-seat") groups, i.e., those which proclaimed that the reigning popes were usurpers rather than the true "vicars of Christ". From then until now, Introvigne has been an activist in Alleanza Cattolica, and his energetic organizing and publishing activities eventually led to his appointment as a national leader of the organization. More recently, following the dissolution of the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) party after its final disgrace in the wake of the "Clean Hands" corruption scandal and the political transition to the so-called Second Republic, Introvigne joined a small right-wing splinter party called the Centro Cristiano Democratico (CCD: Democratic Christian Center). The CCD in turn became a member of the rightist "Pole of Liberty" coalition, along with Alleanza Nazionale (AN: National Alliance), formerly the MSI, and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia ("Go Italy!").(5) In short, Introvigne has been a hard-line political and religious conservative throughout his entire life.

How, then, did he end up defending the religious freedom of satanists and vampire aficionados at the World Dracula Society in 1997? To shed light on this complex question, we are reprinting several articles below that deal in

# The cult





Dr. Plínio Corrêa Oliveira in action.

WARS

part two



some depth with aspects of Introvigne's background and activities.

The centerpiece is a long article by Dr. Miguel Martínez, a specialist on religious matters who has created an entire website devoted to exposing the real agenda of Introvigne and CESNUR ([www.kelebekler.com/cesnur](http://www.kelebekler.com/cesnur)). The portions of Martínez' hitherto unpublished manuscript that we are printing below provide an incredibly rich mine of information concerning Introvigne's background, information which should give pause to his more naïve academic collaborators. It isn't really possible to do justice to Martínez' thoroughly-documented study in a brief summary, but his central thesis is that the ideology of Alleanza Cattolica, and consequently that of Introvigne himself, is based upon the counterrevolutionary doctrines of a Brazilian bishop and ultratraditionalist theorist named Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, who founded an organization known as the Sociedade Brasileira per la Defesa da Tradição, Família e Propriedade (TFP: Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property). TFP hoped to reestablish a quasi-

deviated from traditionalist Catholic orthodoxy, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses. But during the mid-1980s, after TFP itself started being accused, mainly by other Catholic traditionalists, of being a cult — quite justifiably, in my view — Plinio suddenly shifted gears and transformed TFP from a "cult bashing" organization into a "cult apologist" organization. This shift was soon reflected in the pages of AC's publication, *Cristianità*, and not long afterwards Introvigne founded CESNUR and embarked upon his own career as a specialist on NRMs. In short, Martínez traces CESNUR's "pro-cult" agenda to that of TFP.

This eye-opening interpretation is further reinforced in a short article by Alessia Guidi, who compares and contrasts the recent remarks made by Introvigne on Swiss television with claims he had made earlier in a 1993 booklet published by AC. According to Guidi, Introvigne clearly revealed AC's and CESNUR's underlying TFP-inspired agenda in that booklet, even though he has made efforts to conceal that same agenda in non-traditionalist forums. Henceforth it may be far more difficult

cle nonetheless provides some interesting insights into Introvigne's connections and activities in the United States, as well as a certain amount of valuable food for thought.

The fourth entry below consists of excerpts from an important article that appeared in the Parisian newsweekly *L'Événement du Jeudi*, written by left-wing journalist Serge Faubert. It concerns the secretive Group de Thèbes (Thebes Group), a veritable secret society composed of the leaders of certain occult groups and scholarly "cult apologists" which held its annual gatherings in rented meeting halls at the headquarters of the Grand Orient de France, one of the two principle masonic obediences in that country. The ostensible goal of this Thebes Group, which planned to change its name on a regular basis and also created a front group known as the Cercle d'Alexandrie (Alexandria Circle) whose purpose was to vet potential recruits for the more secretive parent group, was to serve as a private forum where members of esoteric fringe groups could exchange information with NRM researchers, away from the prying eyes of the uncompre-

medieval Catholic social order with itself at its head, clearly a utopian fantasy, but in practice this caused it to actively resist all social, economic, cultural, and political changes which it viewed as having been inspired by a succession of "evil" anti-Christian revolutions: the schismatic Protestant Reformation, the secular and rationalist French Revolution, the subversive Communist Revolution, and the degenerate Countercultural Revolution. In order to accomplish its objectives, TFP not only created an authoritarian cult-like organizational structure capable of instilling Plinio's doctrines in members via manipulation and coercion, but also collaborated *tangibly* with a number of brutal military regimes in South America by justifying the launching of "counterrevolutionary" operations.<sup>(6)</sup> Among other things, TFP helped to co-opt and suppress radical peasant movements in Brazil, and it soon managed to establish branches throughout Latin America, as well as in the United States and Europe. According to Martínez, both AC and Introvigne actively promoted TFP's reactionary agenda in their various publications. At first this led them to attack secular humanism virulently in all of its forms, especially those which they referred to as the "abortionist cult" and the "communist cult" — note the terminology employed! — as well as all types of religious groups that

for Introvigne to sustain his somewhat disingenuous self-portrayal as nothing more than a truth-seeking social scientist.

We then reprint three additional selections that describe other facets of Introvigne's lesser-known activities. One is an article by Lucio Tancredi that appeared in the "left fascist" journal *Orion*, whose publishers now constitute the Italian branch of the revamped European Liberation Front, an international association of radically anti-American and anti-imperialist "national revolutionary" groups, including, among others, the post-Heick American Front in the US, the National Bolshevik Party in Russia, Alternativa Europea (AE: European Alternative) in Spain, and, perhaps most ironically (given the controversial issues raised immediately below), Christian Bouchet's Nouvelle Résistance (NR: New Resistance) group in France. According to Tancredi, what Introvigne is really up to, given his unceasing efforts to defend US-based "pseudo-spiritual multinationals", is promoting the hypocritical American neo-conservative campaign against "religious persecution" abroad and, in the process, covertly attempting to influence European far right groups in the interests of international capitalism. On the basis of the available evidence such an interpretation seems off target, but the *Orion* arti-

hending public. The scholars would then report on aspects of these groups, whilst maintaining their sensitive inner secrets, at select academic and CESNUR-sponsored conferences. This raises broader questions about exactly where the boundary between practicing occultists and "outside" participant observers can and should be drawn, as well as about possible conflicts of interest, but for our purposes the importance of the Thebes Group lies in the fact that Massimo Introvigne was one of its founding members, and that other leading CESNUR figures, such as Swiss NRM specialist Jean-François Mayer, were also affiliated with the group. Even more interesting, several of the scholars and occultists associated with the group had previously had — and in certain cases continued to have — radical right political associations. For example, one of the key Thebans was none other than Christian Bouchet, who had previously been affiliated with Jean-Gilles Malliarakis' Mouvement Nationaliste Révolutionnaire (MNR: Nationalist Revolutionary Movement), and had later become the leader of the most left-leaning (*terceriste*) current within that organization (which had by then been renamed Troisième Voie [TV: Third Way]). He then broke with Malliarakis, who he accused of being a "reactionary", and formed his own NR organization.



Bouchet was also heavily involved in occultist circles, having written his Ph.D. thesis on Aleister Crowley's Thelemite Movement and developed close links to — if not formal affiliations with — a number of esoteric, satanist, and countercultural groups.(7) Also among the numerous Thebans with a radical right background was CESNUR's own Mayer, who as a youth had been involved in a number of neo-fascist ventures. Among other things, in the mid-70s he was the Lyon representative of *Defense de l'Occident*, fascist theorist Maurice Bardèche's influential journal; until 1979 he was an activist in the regionalist group Horizons Européennes, which was backed by the "federalist" faction of the *nouvelle droite*; in 1979 he also edited the Swiss Odinist journal *Skuld*; and he was a contributor to the Groupe de Recherches et d'Études sur la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE: Research and Study Group on European Civilization) literary journal, *Panorama des Idées Actuelles*, between 1979 and 1986. Despite this peculiar background — or perhaps precisely because of it — he later managed to become a leading

behavior for those who claim to be good Catholics.

I myself am not certain what to make of all this. After all, these matters are very complex, not to mention murky. There seems to be no doubt, however, that Massimo Introvigne is a Catholic activist who is vigorously defending NRMs for reasons other than simple scholarly curiosity, a deep-rooted concern for civil liberties, or a principled opposition to governmental abuses of power per se. Although such diverse motives may well be complimentary and need not be mutually exclusive, Martinez makes a very convincing case below that Introvigne's motives are primarily religious in nature, and that by defending every unconventional religious group he is also helping to defend the interests of TFP, whose eccentric leader was the doctrinal font of many of his own peculiar "counterrevolutionary" theories. Indeed, as Guidi further shows below, Introvigne incautiously revealed and partially clarified his underlying religious agenda in a booklet published by AC that had previously been overlooked. Even so, I believe that the

in the long-term struggle against secularism. Therefore, by strongly opposing all attempts by governments, however legitimate, to crack down on the problematic socio-psychological, financial, and political activities of certain cults, Introvigne and CESNUR may be simultaneously serving the interests of a multiplicity of groups, ranging from cults themselves to authoritarian Catholic sects to elements within the Church hierarchy to academic NRM apologists to genuine civil liberties organizations, all of which have their own peculiar motives for defending NRMs. Motives which, it should be emphasized, are often fundamentally incompatible, if not entirely antithetical. What we seem to have here is an example of the standard rationale for making common cause with strange bedfellows: the sometimes foolish conviction that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

Nor should one overlook the possibility that Introvigne obtains certain deep-seated personal and psychological benefits from engaging in these ongoing pro-NRM activities. Consider, if you will, a repressed Catholic militant who has

consultant on religious matters for the Swiss Defense Ministry.(8) Other right-wing Thebans are discussed below in Faubert's article.

The final entry consists of portions of articles that appeared in the journal *Sodalitium*, the organ of an Italian *sedevacanza* organization known as the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii. These articles reflect criticisms of Introvigne and CESNUR that are now emanating from certain sections of the ultratraditionalist Catholic right. Hence it is not surprising that "Father Torquemada", the pseudonymous (and witty) author of these hostile articles in *Sodalitium*, would be especially scandalized by Introvigne's alleged associations with satanists and Freemasons — both of whom have long numbered among the traditional enemies of the Catholic Church — specifically through his frequent appearances at underground satanist "black masses", his prior membership in the scientific committee of the quasi-Masonic journal *Ars Regia*, and his curious decision to hold Thebes Group meetings at the masonic Grand Orient de France's headquarters, potentially "sinister" activities which might well serve to explain his extraordinarily sympathetic, if not entirely heretical, current attitudes toward unorthodox religious groups. In the eyes of *Sodalitium*, rubbing shoulders with satanists and Freemasons is anything but appropriate

"cult apology" campaigns which are being continually waged by Introvigne and CESNUR have been motivated by far more than a simple desire to defend the relatively narrow interests of TFP, and in this limited context I must respectfully take issue with Martinez.

My own view, which is admittedly somewhat speculative and at present based on a rather limited number of sources, is that Introvigne also represents, and is in part pursuing, the interests of certain powerful factions inside the Vatican.(9) Within the Church hierarchy, there are (at least) two contrasting views about how best to respond to the challenge posed by unorthodox religious groups, Catholic and otherwise. On the one hand, the more narrow-minded traditionalists continue to view such groups as dangerously heretical enemies who should be vigorously fought and harshly suppressed. The members of this particular faction can be seen, metaphorically-speaking, as heirs of the Inquisitors. On the other hand, there is a rather more sophisticated and far-seeing faction that is competing with the first which views "secular humanism" in all of its manifestations as the main threat. On the basis of that premise, this second group views all other religious groups, including those that are clearly heretical and perhaps even anti-Catholic, as potential de facto allies

— on the surface, at least — spent most of his life leading a relatively austere bourgeois lifestyle, working as a respectable patent lawyer, and promoting an inflexible counterrevolutionary ideology. Can you imagine how thrilling, if not liberating, it must now be for him to participate on a regular basis in shockingly "taboo" activities like attending satanist black masses and gatherings of self-styled vampires, all the while claiming to be a concerned scholar who is merely engaged in "participant observation" of the groups he is studying? In other words, in addition to the prestige that is nowadays accruing to him as a result of his impressive publishing and conference organizing activities, he can now frequently indulge in pleasurable, even exhilarating activities that his own religious milieu previously viewed as "perverse" and "degenerate", and then later make a convincing case, both to himself and others, that he is doing so solely in order to promote agendas that are both "religiously correct" and politically righteous. Thus, Although amateur psychologizing of this sort should always be taken with a grain of salt, it would probably be unwise to completely ignore Introvigne's possible personal motives.

In any case, our purpose in publishing the articles below is simply to shed some light on the complex background and motives of



Massimo Introvigne and, by extension, some of his closest colleagues in CESNUR. I do not claim that we have fully clarified the actual nature of their agenda, but I believe that we have demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that they do in fact have various unspecified agendas. Moreover, by and large these agendas have hitherto been artfully hidden from most of CESNUR's "profane" collaborators, above all the ever-growing number of gullible academic specialists on "New Religious Movements" or, to use their most recent politically correct euphemisms, "minoritarian religions" and "spiritual minorities".

This brings us back to our point of origin, namely, the astonishingly naive attitude displayed by so many academic "experts" — whether they are housed in the History, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Political Science, or Sociology departments — about the real nature of various NRMs and certain other fringe groups of a therapeutic or political nature. This naivete all too often persists *even when virtually all of the available evidence* indicates that the miniature totalitarian groups in question systematically apply thought reform techniques and impose authoritarian social control methods, in some instances even outright physical abuse, on their own adherents, as well as sometimes committing acts of violence against outside critics. Nor is this all. Not only are many of these "experts" unable (or perhaps unwilling) to recognize the totalitarian nature of a number of influential NRMs, in some cases even those that they themselves have studied (!), but they also appear to be wholly unaware of the covert religious and political agendas being pursued by some of their own "cult apologist" allies, including researchers such as Introvigne and other members of groups such as CESNUR.(10) It goes without saying that these same self-styled "experts" have probably never even heard of more obscure esoteric organizations that may have some bearing on their subjects, such as the Group de Thèbes, the Ordre Rénové du Temple, Nueva Acrópolis, the Luciferian Ordre Vert, the Legionarios de Cristo, etc. One is tempted to conclude that several of these NRM "experts", the majority of whom are rather parochial Americans who seem not to know any foreign languages, are unwittingly serving as "useful idiots", both for certain noxious cults and for the far more sophisticated cult defenders affiliated with CESNUR.

However that may be, these harsh criticisms of certain circles of "cult apologists" are not meant to dismiss or trivialize legitimate concerns about societal threats to religious freedom or governmental abuses of the civil rights of members of non-mainstream groups, concerns which I myself share. Whether the underlying motives of cult defenders are noble

or base, honest or sinister, this does not alter the fact that persecutorial campaigns against unconventional religions are not uncommon events, even in our supposedly enlightened era. Two high-profile examples should suffice to illustrate recent societal overreactions to the dangers thought to be posed by certain religious cults. First, delusional conspiracy theories postulating the existence of a vast network of underground satanic cults that are allegedly engaged, among other things, in systematically kidnapping and ritually murdering children, led to the development of a "satanic panic" in the 1980s and 1990s, both in the United States and Britain. Despite the fact that such a satanist underground has never existed, a number of innocent individuals were falsely accused and later imprisoned for child abuse and other horrendous crimes after a witchhunting mentality spread like wildfire in certain communities (e.g., Edenton, North Carolina).(11) Second, the bungled 1993 assaults on the Branch Davidian compound by both the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and, later, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) resulted in the tragic immolation of many members of that sectarian group. Although I believe that David Koresh was an unstable individual with a volatile apocalyptic worldview, and am by no means convinced that these government agencies could have avoided the use of force no matter how they handled the case, there is no doubt that their clumsy use of violence dramatically worsened the situation and ultimately precipitated a catastrophe.(12)

For that very reason, the "Waco affair" was an important and traumatic milestone in the development of the [NRM] field and in the interactions between scholars and authorities", and in its wake a consensus has emerged among social scientists and religious experts that the authorities henceforth need to make greater efforts to "understand" and empathize with the complex worldviews of minoritarian religious groups — which implies, not coincidentally, that they should first consult with NRM "experts"! — and that they should *avoid taking any actions which might be interpreted as hostile by such groups*.(13) Moreover, since a more tolerant, sensitive approach was in fact successfully employed by the FBI to defuse hostilities and peacefully end the standoff outside the Montana Freeman compound, it is now viewed as a veritable panacea by most of today's NRM researchers.

Nevertheless, apart from the fact that the burden for avoiding a violent confrontation should not be placed entirely on one party in a dispute, in this case the authorities, and that in practice the taking of any action at all will almost invariably be interpreted as hostile by cult leaders and followers, there is another, equally compelling side to this story. Although

I would agree that it is crucially important for outsiders to obtain an accurate understanding of the worldviews of the leaders and members of these groups, and that the authorities should generally exercise patience and restraint *if the situation warrants it*, it would be very unwise to insist that they act equally cautiously and circumspectly in every situation. After all, it was *the unwillingness of the authorities to take decisive action* which resulted, in so many other instances, in tragedies that were — or at least had the potential for being — much more destructive than the one at Waco, including the Jonestown, Ordre du Temple Solaire, Aum Shinrikyo, and Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments (MRTC) cases. This is precisely what prompted Reader to argue that the Aum case "serves as a potential counterweight to the conclusions many of us had drawn from Waco," since in that instance many leading NRM scholars had been induced to uncritically defend a truly murderous cult.(14) If Waco represented a disastrous *overreaction* by American police agencies, the Aum affair reflected a potentially catastrophic *lack of action*, until it was almost too late, by their Japanese counterparts. What this suggests is that there is no single approach that is suited to resolving all of the potential conflicts which may arise between non-mainstream religions and society at large, and hence that it is not really sensible for the authorities to rely solely on one response paradigm when dealing with violence-prone fringe groups. On the contrary, since every case has unique features, it is necessary for them to be flexible and adaptable in their approach, and to respond to the actions of each specific group in a somewhat different way. This would seem to be self-evident. Why, then, have so many NRM "experts" ended up adopting a totally one-sided, "pro-cult" approach when dealing with such complex and fluid matters?

-Jeff Bale

## Notes:

(1) Introvigne has published an extraordinary number of books and articles on NRMs in a relatively short period of time. Among his most important works are *Il cappello del mago: I nuovi movimenti magici, dallo spiritismo al satanismo* (Milan: Sugar, 1990); *Indagine sul satanismo: Satanisti e anti-satanisti dal Seicento ai nostri giorni* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994); *I nuovi culti: Dagli Hare Krishna alla Scintologia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1990); and *Le nuove religioni* (Milan: Sugar, 1989). Note also the volume he edited on Freemasonry, *Massoneria e religioni* (Turin: Elle Di Ci, 1994), and the pamphlet he recently wrote to help inaugurate a new series of booklets on NRMs that he and J. Gordon Melton hope will be regularly assigned in university-level



(2) For more on CESNUR, one should begin by examining the group's own website: [www.cesnur.org](http://www.cesnur.org). One can then follow this up by examining various publications published or sponsored by CESNUR, including Massimo Introvigne & J. Gordon Melton, eds., *Pour en finir avec les sectes: Le débat sur le rapport de la commission parlementaire* (Paris: Dervy, 1996); Massimo Introvigne et al., *I nuovi movimenti religiosi: Sette cristiane e nuovi culti* (Turin: Elle Di Ci, 1990); and Richard Bergeron, *Damné Satan: Quand le diable refait surface* (Paris: Fides, 1988), which was sponsored by the French (or French Canadian) branch of CESNUR, the Centre d'Information sur les Nouvelles Religions. For a variety of less sanguine interpretations of the role and significance of CESNUR, see Miguel Martínez' CESNUR "critical page" website: [www.kelebekler.com/cesnur](http://www.kelebekler.com/cesnur)

(3) The best general history of the MSI is that of Piero Ignazi, *Il polo escluso: Profilo storico del Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Bologna: Mulino, 1998). Throughout most of its existence, this electoral party was divided into three rival factions: a radical right current inspired by the example of the Waffen-SS and the elitist ideas of "esoteric traditionalist" philosopher Giulio Cesare ("Julius") Evola; a centrist, pro-Atlantic conservative majority which sought to obtain a much-needed legitimacy within the postwar parliamentary system; and a radical left current which looked for its inspiration to "fascism of the first hour" and the quasi-socialist Verona Charter promulgated in 1944 by Mussolini's rump Salò Republic. Prominent members of the radical factions, who were disgusted by the "reactionary" policies pursued by the MSI's "bourgeois" leaders, periodically broke away from the party and went on to form their own extraparlimentary groups. After the collapse of the First Republic, the moderate MSI majority created Alleanza Nazionale as a successor party to the MSI.

(4) For more on AC, see Giovanni Tassani, *La cultura politica della destra cattolica* (Rome: Coines, 1976), pp. 206-12. For Lefebvre and his excommunication, see the short introduction by Luc Perrin, *L'affaire Lefebvre* (Paris: Cerf, 1989). Unfortunately, most of the books dealing with this controversial matter are highly biased, either enthusiastically favoring or strongly opposing the indefatigable Monseigneur.

(5) For the transition from the First to the Second Republic, see Mark F. Gilbert, *The Italian Revolution: The End of Politics, Italian Style?* (Boulder: Westview, 1995). For AN, see Piero Ignazi, *Postfascisti? Dal Movimento Sociale Italiano ad Alleanza Nazionale* (Bologna: Mulino, 1994); Marco Tarchi, *Dal MSI ad AN: Organizzazione e strategie* (Bologna: Mulino, 1997); and Paolo Nello, *Il Partito della fiamma: La Destra in Italia fra MSI al AN* (Pisa: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1998), as well as books about its current leader, e.g., Goffredo Locatelli, *Duce,*

*addio: La biografia di Gianfranco Fini* (Milan: Longanesi, 1994). For Forza Italia, see Domenico Mennitti, ed., *Forza Italia: Radiografia di un evento* (Rome: Ideazione, 1997); and Carmen Golia, *Dentro Forza Italia: Organizzazione e militanza* (Venice: Marsilio, 1997), as well as works about its leader, media baron Silvio Berlusconi, e.g., Giovanni Ruggeri & Mario Guarino, *Berlusconi: Inchiesta sul Signor TV* (Milan: Kaos, 1994).

(6) For more on TFP's doctrines and activities, see Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New Rochelle, NY: Foundation for a Christian Civilization, 1980) [a translation of the original Portuguese version, *Revolução e contra-revolução*]; and TFP, *Tradition, Family, Property: Half a Century of Epic Anticommunism* (Mount Kisco, NY: Foundation for a Christian Civilization, 1981) [a translation of *Meio século de epopéia anticomunista*]. For the group's cult-like structure and thought reform practices, see especially José Antônio Pedriali, *Guerreiros da virgem: A vida secreta na TFP* (São Paulo: EMW, 1985). This work by a former TFP activist was considered so damaging that Plinio himself felt it necessary to issue a lengthy response: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Guerreiros da virgem: A replica do autenticidade. A TFP sem segredos* (São Paulo: Vera Cruz, 1985). Note that these bitter polemics corresponded precisely to the period identified by Martínez as the crucial point in the shift of TFP's attitudes toward cults, and indeed may have played a key role in helping to precipitate that very shift. For TFP's active collaboration with the dictatorial regimes in Brazil and Chile, as well as its involvement in counterrevolutionary operations elsewhere in Latin America, see the journalistic exposés by Scott Anderson & Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposé of how Terrorists, Nazis and Latin American Death Squads have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1986), pp. 78, 140; and Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People: United States Involvement in the Rise of Fascism, Torture, and Murder and the Persecution of the Catholic Church in Latin America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), especially pp. 294-304. To cite only a couple of illustrative examples, in Brazil leading TFP members were among the instructors who taught history and politics at the prestigious Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG: Higher War College), where the brightest junior military officers were trained and where the influential countersubversive "Doctrine of National Security" was first developed, whereas in Chile the leading ideologist of the Pinochet regime was none other than TFP activist Jaime Guzmán, who was also closely linked to the right-wing paramilitary group Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Freedom). As yet, not a single academic historian or Latin America specialist has produced a scholarly work on TFP, an astonishing lacuna given the endless profusion of academic studies on "liberation theology" and the Catholic left in Latin America.

(7) For more on the MNR, see Alain Rollat, *Les hommes de l'extrême droite: Le Pen, Marie, Ortiz et*

*les autres* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1981), pp. 171-81; and Jean-Gilles Malliarakis, *Ni Trusts Ni Soviets* (Paris: Trident, 1985), esp. pp. 63-74. For TV, see Christophe Bourseiller, *Les ennemis du système: Enquête sur les mouvements extrémistes en France* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1989), pp. 187-93. For more on Bouchet's more recent political activities, including NR and its participation in the ELF, see Jeffrey M. Bale, "'National Revolutionary' Groupuscules and the Resurgence of 'Left-Wing' Fascism: The Case of France's Nouvelle Résistance," forthcoming in *Patterns of Prejudice*. For his occultist activities, see Jean-Paul Bourre, *Les profanateurs: La nébuleuse de tous les périls. Nouvelle Droite, Skinheads, Rock metal, Néonazis* (no place: Le Comptoir, 1997), pp. 49-69 and passim; Paul Ariès, *Le retour du Diable: Satanisme, exorcisme, extrême droite* (Brussels: Gollias, 1997), pp. 237-8. Bouchet's doctoral thesis was later published as *Aleister Crowley et le mouvement thélémitique* (Château-Thébaud: Chaos, 1998). There has long been a considerable overlap, both in terms of ideas and personnel, between the radical right and esoteric undergrounds. See, e.g., Eduard Gugenberger & Roman Schweidlenka, *Mutter Erde, Magie und Politik: Zwischen Faschismus und neuer Gesellschaft* (Vienna: Gesellschaftskritik, 1987); Friedrich-Paul Heller & Anton Maegerle, *Thule: Vom völkischen Okkultismus bis zur Neuen Rechten* (Stuttgart: Schmetterling, 1998); and Franziska Hundseder, *Wotans Junger: Neuheidnische Gruppen zwischen Esoterik und Rechtsradikalismus* (Munich: Heyne, 1998).

(8) For bits and pieces concerning Mayer's political background, see Jean-Yves Camus & René Monzat, *Les droites nationales et radicales en France: Répertoire critique* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1992), pp. 232, 301, 361; and the reply of Xavier Pasquini, co-author of *Encyclopédie des sectes dans le monde* (Paris: H. Veyrier, 1984), published in the 14 October 1998 issue of *Charlie Hebdo*, which can be found on the internet. Like Introvigne, Mayer is a very knowledgeable person, a sophisticated thinker, and a very prolific author. Among his many works are *Les nouvelles voies spirituelles: Enquête sur la religiosité parallèle en Suisse* (Lausanne: Age d'Homme, 1993); *Les sectes: Non-conformismes chrétiens et nouvelle religions* (Paris: Cerf, 1988); *Les mythes du Temple solaire* (Geneva: Georg, 1996); *Religions et sécurité internationale* (Berne: Office Centrale de la Défense, 1995); and his "autobiography", *Confessions d'un chasseur des sectes* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).

(9) There are some indications of this in various articles posted on Alessia Guidi's useful website: <http://members.xoom.it/xemu>. For example, an article in the 8 September 1999 issue of *Diario della Settimana* indicates that Introvigne published an article in the more or less official journal of the Catholic Church in France, *Documentation Catholique*, wherein he argued that it was impossible to distinguish between "dangerous cults and legitimate religious movements". This elicited a protest



from Jacques Trouslard, a French priest who served as a consultant for the government's Interministerial Commission to Fight Cults, who claimed that Introvigne's views should not be considered identical to those of the Church concerning this matter. I suspect that this incident is itself indicative of the split that I have postulated between different factions of the Catholic hierarchy. In that same article, Introvigne is said to be linked both to TFP and to another conservative Catholic group known as the Legionarios de Cristo (Legionaries of Christ). This is quite revealing if true since, according to another article on the same website, the Legionarios de Cristo group is a disciplined (old-style) Jesuit-like organization that was established in Mexico in 1941 and is today intransigently supportive of the current Pope, who did much to officially validate the group's status and mission during the 1990s. This "enigmatic Catholic congregation" is headquartered in the Ateneo Regina Apostolorum seminary in Rome, its U.S. headquarters is located in Mount Kisco (NY), and it numbers 350 priests (with 2400 more in training) and 25,000 lay members in fourteen countries on four continents. It aims to create a revitalized Catholic elite and its chief activities are devoted to "re-Christianizing" Latin America in the face of the threats posed by "liberation theology" and especially charismatic Protestant sects. See Michel Arseneault, "Le nuove legioni di Giovanni Paul II: Contro-offensiva del Vaticano in America Latina," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 1996) [translation from French to Italian by Guidi].

(10) Nor is gross ignorance confined to the legions of academic NRM "experts" who may be unknowingly being manipulated by CESNUR. Even certain members of CESNUR's "outer circle" sometimes seem to be wholly in the dark. Note, e.g., the astonishing admission by Reender Kranenborg, the organizer of a 1997 CESNUR conference in Holland, that he had never even heard of Nueva Acropolis! Or the statement by Moonie expert Eileen Barker, a CESNUR member and founder of yet another "cult apologist" organization in Britain — the Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM) — who publicly acknowledged that she had no idea what the initials "VPM" stood for (in fact, they stand for the Verein zur Förderung Psychologischen Menschenkenntnis (VPM: Association for Research on Human Psychological Knowledge), even though she was chairing a panel that included a self-serving presentation on this very same German psychotherapy cult! (Both of these remarks were cited by Herman de Tollaene in an article in *De Groene Amsterdammer*, which was reprinted in the last issue of *Hit List*.) It could be, of course, that both

Kranenborg and Barker were feigning ignorance in order to avoid the embarrassment of acknowledging that they were knowingly allowing cult members to give presentations on their own groups. But if one is kind enough to accept their statements at face value, one must then question their degree of "expertise" concerning cults.

(11) For the "satanic panic" of the 1980s and early 1990s, see, e.g., Jeffrey S. Victor, *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993); Robert D. Hicks, *In Pursuit of Satan: The Police and the Occult* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1991); James T. Richardson et al, *The Satanism Scare* (New York: A. de Gruyter, 1991); and Jean S. La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil: Tales of Satanic Abuse in Contemporary England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994). Of course, there are innumerable journalistic and evangelical publications that actively promote the "satanist underground" thesis, but these are based almost entirely on fanciful "firsthand" accounts and sensationalistic conspiracy theories rather than reliable evidence.

(12) For the Waco affair, see Stuart A. Wright, ed., *Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidians* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); James D. Taylor & Eugen V. Gallagher, *Why Waco?: Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); and Dick J. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation* (New York: Syracuse University, 1998), all of which are written by cult sympathiz-

ers. Compare various official government reports, e.g., United States, Department of Justice, *Report on the Events at Waco, Texas, February 28 to April 19, 1993* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993); United States, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, *Report of the Department of the Treasury on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Investigation of Vernon Wayne Howell, also known as David Koresh* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993); and United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Materials relating to an Investigation into the Activities of the Federal Law Enforcement Agencies toward the Branch Davidians* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997). There is also a sensationalistic anti-Koresh popular literature.

(13) The quote is from Ian Reader, "Scholarship, Aum Shinrikyo, and Academic Integrity", *Nova Religio* 3:2 (April 2000), p. 378.

(14) *Ibid*.

*Note: I would like to correct two minor errors that appeared in my introduction to the first part of this "Cult Wars" series. First, Jeffrey Hadden is now a professor at the University of Virginia. Second, the Ordre du Temple Solaire (OTS: Order of the Solar Temple) case was not merely a "mass suicide". It involved both the voluntary suicide of the group's leaders, and the ritualistic (or revenge) murders of dozens of other members of the group. Also, I would like to thank Kevin Coogan, Miguel Martinez and Alessia Guidi for their assistance with this article.*

## **The Secret Story of a Cult Apologist: Massimo Introvigne, CESNUR and the Brazilian Right-Wing Organization, "Tradition, Family and Property" (TFP)**

by Dr. Miguel Martinez

### **CESNUR and Alleanza Cattolica**

**M**assimo Introvigne, on the cover of his own books, always claims to be one of the directors of another association, called Alleanza Cattolica (hereafter AC). Introvigne

is currently one of only five "consultori" (an unusual word indeed in Italian) of AC. Another, Alfredo Mantovano, is a leading figure in Alleanza Nazionale, Italy's right-wing party, and was briefly its "national coordinator", a job which put him practically in charge of the entire party, under the national secretary Gianfranco Fini. This is rather surprising, and may reveal something of the political clout of AC, if we remember that Mantovano joined Fini's party only three months before. (see "An, primo atto dell'epurazione", *La Stampa*, December 11, 1997, p. 6)

However, AC never bets on one horse only — Introvigne is a prominent member of another right-wing party, the CCD [Centro Cristiano Democratico]. Another Alleanza Cattolica member, Vietti, was also the group leader in Parliament of the same party. Of course, there is nothing wrong per se about holding membership in various organizations, however controversial some of them



may be. After all, as Introvigne objected in an e-mail note of his, "the most usual confusion about CESNUR is not to be able to distinguish individual affiliations of directors with the association as such." The problem, however, is this: is Introvigne a member of AC; or is CESNUR itself a member of AC?

AC is an organization which has been around for roughly thirty years, and has only 200-300 members. Living at the very margin of the official Catholic Church, for reasons which will soon become clear, it has rarely made headlines; until quite recently, it was quite a poor organization, without any influence whatsoever. Things changed for two reasons: the political success in 1994 of the right, a congerie of parties which obtained millions of votes without the leadership to manage them, opened up incredible prospects for AC which had long been grooming its followers as an intellectual "élite". The other factor was the sudden, worldwide success of Introvigne as a newly-born "sociologist".

Even a cursory look at the homepage of AC, which proudly boasts that "militants of AC have founded" three organizations — CESNUR, IDIS (the Institute for Social Doctrine and Information), and ISIN (Institute for the Study of the 'Insorgenze') — clearly shows that the relationship between CESNUR and AC goes farther than

AC's politics are no secret: on March 26, 1994, AC published an "appeal" for the coming political elections, inviting voters to "take part actively, voting for the lists which present the clearest opposition to the 'radical mass party', that is, the front formed by socialcommunists and 'progressives', who are promoting the de-Christianization of the Italian people." This campaign was part of a larger campaign, well-publicized in *Il Secolo d'Italia*, the daily of the party then known as MSI-National Right [Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale] (e.g., in the January 6, 1994 issue) called "A human and political Christian action for rebuilding the identity of the Italian people". In the manifesto of this campaign, Giovanni Cantoni, the AC leader, says that Liberté and Fraternité may be acceptable, but Egalité is definitely not. In other words, militants of the right-wing organization AC create right-wing groups. Of course they are quite free to do so, as long as they do not represent themselves to be practitioners of the science of sociology, as opposed to a world of "amateurs".

AC is also active among the so-called "far right", a term which in Italy covers a very complicated world of small and conflicting organizations. Just one example out of many — on April 24, 1998, Aldo Carletti, member of both CESNUR and AC — spoke at a meet-

Cantoni, officially "National Regent" of the organization. "Regent" is a rather unusual term in Italian, where it can either mean an interim functionary or something like a "ruler", the reason why this term is occasionally used by some right-wing groups which wish to avoid such democratic terms as "president". Of course the official explanation is the first, but Cantoni's interim has lasted several decades. In any case, a member of Alleanza Cattolica confirmed the fact that this term is used in the same sense as in English — a temporary ruler governing in the name of another, in this case (for ideological reasons which shall become evident later on) the Virgin Mary. Giovanni Cantoni is also co-author, together with Introvigne, of a booklet called *Libertà religiosa, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione'*, which is one long attack on so-called "anti-cult movements".

Alleanza Cattolica, unlike Massimo Introvigne, has never hidden its extremist views, which of course it has a full right to hold. Here for example is the text of a leaflet of this organization, dating back to the mid-Seventies, which refers to one of Italy's endless and unimportant political "crises", when government posts were reshuffled for the thousandth time, followed by elections with tiny percentage changes. The "red government" referred to was a typically moderate coalition of Christian Democrats and

mere "personal affiliation". IDIS is so closely associated with the right-wing party, Alleanza Nazionale, that every week the daily of this party — *Il Secolo d'Italia* — devotes a full page to it. Indeed, IDIS may be said to be the leading right-wing think tank in Italy, and derives its ideas largely from two sources: the ideology of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (more about this later) and US "neo-conservatives)". "Insorgenze", in the initials of ISIN, refers to the anti-Napoleonic uprisings in Italy at the close of the eighteenth century, an episode which has been completely and undeservedly deleted from Italy's history. But of course the purpose of this institute is highly ideological: to create an alternative historical myth to the secular Risorgimento of Cavour and Garibaldi, and to the "Communist" resistance movement. Like CESNUR, ISIN includes some serious scholars, who are not always aware of the wider agenda they have been fitted into.

ing organized in Varese by the Centro Studi Trans Lineam (see *Orion*, n. 163, April 1998, p. 39). Writing in *Orion*, a magazine which reflects many different opinions within this milieu, Lucio Tancredi has accused AC of infiltrating the "far right" and trying to convert it to US-style neo-conservatism. There is, as we shall see, a reason behind this: the "Counter-Revolutionary" thinking which inspired the Catholic movement AC also inspired such non-Christian works as Julius Evola's *Revolt Against the Modern World* and René Guénon's *The Crisis of the Modern World*. Their ideas are by no means identical, but despite quite different views on Christianity, there are points of contact in the "spiritual politics" of all three, and in their views on the "decadence of the modern world".

Introvigne is by no means the only person in CESNUR, at least in Italy, to be involved with AC. A person closely involved is the leader of AC himself, Giovanni

Socialists, with outside support by Italy's extremely cautious Communist Party: "Vote anti-communist, but don't stop there! The red Andreotti-Berlinguer government has 'committed suicide' in order to anticipate the historic compromise [between the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party], and the historic compromise is the forerunner of a Communist regime." This rather boring power juggling leads the author of the leaflet to compare the Italian situation with Cambodia, no less, and he finishes with this dramatic call to action: "Do not despair! Help yourself so God may help you!"

#### **Before Introvigne Became a "Sociologist": From the Seminary to the War against "Pornocratic Sex Priests"**

We have already seen [in a portion of this manuscript not published here] how controversial the issue of Introvigne's cre-



dentials is. Just five years before he burst onto the world scene as a sociologist and as the greatest expert on "New Religious Movements", here is his curriculum as it appears on the dust jacket of his book, *Pornografia e rivoluzione sessuale* (Chiavenna: Libreria San Lorenzo, 1983):

"Massimo Introvigne was born in Rome on July 14, 1955. Formerly a student of the Jesuit Fathers, he obtained his bachelor's degree in philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, with a composition on the moral philosophy of Wittgenstein. He then graduated in law at the University of Turin, with a thesis on the contemporary juridical philosophy in the United States. Part of this work, after editing and reviewing, will appear in the Annals of the Law Institute of Turin. At the same University, Introvigne currently does teaching and research in the field of philosophy of law.

He works in the legal profession as a consultant on industrial property, and belongs to several professional associations. In this role, he writes for several specialised Italian and foreign journals (especially in the United States) and has attended law conferences in Italy and abroad, where he has read papers on industrial property, licences and unfair competition.

Ever since the first years of high school, he has been a militant of Alleanza Cattolica, a civic and cultural body which has the purpose of educating men and spreading ideas according to the social principles of the Church and the political and social magisterium of the Popes. He writes regularly for *Cristianità*, the official organ of Alleanza Cattolica, especially on philosophical and moral issues; in the same magazine, he has also carried out studies on the Catholic culture of Piedmont and on 19th century saints in Turin.

As a speaker, he has spoken to various Italian citizens during the meetings of 'friends of *Cristianità*', organised by the magazine and by Alleanza Cattolica, as well as in seminars and lectures organised by Alleanza Cattolica, alone or together with other groups or associations."

Considering his later ideas on anti-cult legislation, it is interesting to note that on page 20 of this booklet, Introvigne says that "Pornography — even when it calls itself artistic — can and must be forbidden on the basis of an ethical judgement, which is at the same time in harmony with the canons of aesthetics as they comply with reason". What should a "consociato" (presumably



I'M A QUALIFIED PATENT LAWYER, BUT I PLAY A SOCIOLOGIST ON TV:...Our main man Mass gesticulates on Italian television.

meaning, an AC member) do about it? Pressure magistrates with briefs and denunciations, of course, while "controlling and judging those politicians who in a thousand ways favour pornography." (p. 21)

Introvigne's ideas — and AC's — come directly from the writings of the Brazilian extremist Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a fact which he now tends to hide in his works. Much more will be said about this unusual personality later on, but here it may be interesting to note how Introvigne, in those early days, was far more explicit. In the same booklet on pornography (p. 23), Introvigne said: "Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, in the 3rd Italian edition of his book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, spoke of a 'IV Revolution', following the I Protestant and absolutist Revolution, the II (liberal and of the Enlightenment) Revolution, and the III and Communist Revolution." This "Fourth Revolution" is supposedly based on drugs, pornography and — in those remote days — on cults.

Massimo Introvigne's debt to Corrêa de Oliveira is apparent in dozens of early documents. To describe the ideas of the Venerable Francesco Faà di Bruno, who died in 1888, decades before Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was born, Introvigne finds nothing better than to quote Plinio, in a way which looks as if he were quoting the 19th century

priest; only a footnote makes it clear that the quotations are from Plinio (and from an anti-Masonic text by E. Delassus published and distributed by Alleanza Cattolica) and not from Faà di Bruno: "Perhaps, however, Francesco Faà di Bruno's secret lies in his clear understanding of the terms of the 'problem of the present hour'. He clearly understood that the anti-Christian Revolution is 'universal, is one, is total, is dominating', that it 'extends, by the very nature of things, to all the faculties of the soul, to every field of culture.'" (Massimo Introvigne in *Cristianità*, April 1979)

Massimo Introvigne joined AC when he was very young, after a short spell in the Monarchist Youth Front. In his curricula, he says he studied "at the Gregorian University in Rome" (this reference is generally purged from his more recent writings); actually, he did so as a seminarian (*Sodalitium*, n. 35, October-November 1993), where he wrote regularly for the right-wing weekly *Il Borghese* under the pseudonym of "Lo Svizzero", i.e., as the "Swiss Guard" defending the Pope against Liberation Theology, then much the fashion.

Despite this defence of the Pope, the entire movement of AC, including young Introvigne, long flirted with Monsignor Lefebvre's Fraternity of Saint Pius X; at the Ecône seminary, he was a much appreciated





lecturer.

A former seminarian graphically described his recollection of young Introvigne, in flowing cassock, discussing priestly fashions with a colleague. A photograph in *L'Europeo* (June 1977) shows young Introvigne, not in the cloth and before his hairline began to recede but with the same intense expression in his eyes, standing as close as possible to Monsignor Lefebvre in a great meeting of Catholic traditionalists at the Roman villa of the Pallavicini family, an event which the Vicar General for Rome, Cardinal Ugo Poletti, branded "as an episode to be forgotten" in *L'Osservatore Romano*. And Introvigne of course promptly did forget the episode. When Lefebvre was excommunicated, AC quickly sized up the situation and opted for supporting the Vatican.

Introvigne became AC's expert on "moral philosophy", meaning an in-depth study on changing sexual mores and pornography, his pet interest before moving on to Satanism (which, along with vampires, is probably the subject Introvigne has the deepest personal involvement in). In those early days,

Introvigne's main thrust was forbidding people to exercise their personal freedom to use drugs or read pornographic material. For example, in an article in *Cristianità* (April 1978), under the title "Un aspetto della guerra sovversiva: la rivoluzione della droga e la 'filosofia chimica'", Introvigne tells the reader that drugs are the next step of the Revolution, "beyond Communism, after Communism". Drugs are part of Mao Tse-Tung's theory that "every man is an objective of the revolutionary war", and fit into "the scheme suggested by prof. Corrêa de Oliveira in his work *Rivoluzione e Contro-Rivoluzione*." In order to set up "the line of a resistance and of a counter-revolution," laws must be made stricter: "From a juridical point of view, one can identify the snare hidden in permissive laws, replying to the further sophistry according to which the drug addict is supposed to harm nobody, and that it would therefore be 'unfair' to deny him the 'freedom to take drugs', and one can prove how this statement is not only immoral (since, in an order which respects natural law, no one has the right to

make an attempt against a life, whether another's or one's own), but is also radically false from the point of view of facts, since it is not only false to say that the drug abuser 'harms no one'; drug abusers are also highly dangerous from a criminal point of view, committing many different crimes."

Whatever one may think of these opinions, they reflect in an interesting manner on Introvigne's later career. First of all, the explanation of the social phenomenon of drug addiction is not sociological (no mention is made, e.g., of the role of consumer society in spreading addiction) but theological-political (some might speak of a conspiracy theory); the purpose of his study is not academic but "counter-revolutionary", and as such does not even consider possible objections (for example, crimes committed by drug addicts may be committed because drugs are illegal); finally, Introvigne — though promoting a "counter-revolutionary social restoration" as the only final solution to the problem — suggests stricter legislation against what libertarians hold to be a "private matter".



## When Introvigne used to Hate "Cults" and Like "Apostates"

Alleanza Cattolica radically changed its views on cults at the end of 1985. Rather more difficult to establish is whether Introvigne did too, for the simple reason that Introvigne hardly ever touched the issue before that year. However, we have seen how AC and Introvigne are virtually synonymous: AC's current line on "apostates" and the use of the word "setta" ("sect" or "cult") are today identical with Introvigne's, and no writing by Introvigne before 1985 shows the slightest deviation from the party line on any of the issues he did deal with at the time; so I believe we can freely compare writings on the subject by Introvigne today with those by AC authors before 1985. In any case, there is an article by Introvigne himself, previous to the great shift of the mid-Eighties. In 1985 he wrote one of his first essays on what he definitely would not have then called a "New Religious Movement", the Jehovah's Witnesses. ("I Testimoni di Geova: un profetismo gnostico" in *Quaderni di Cristianità*, Spring 1985, p. 20 ff.) The opening paragraph of this nineteen-page article speaks for itself:

### "A privileged witness: Raymond Franz"

Literature on the Jehovah's Witnesses already includes the often worrying testimonies of people who have left this cult [setta] to join the Catholic Church, like Günther Pape, or some Protestant group, such as William J. Schnell, George Terry, Richard Cotton, John Bevins or William Cetnar. The book *Crisis of Conscience* by Raymond Franz, published in the United States in 1983, however, offers for the first time the testimony of a member of the Governing Body who, after having been part of the Governing Body — the supreme government of the Jehovah's Witnesses, considered to be the channel for communication between God and his people — left the organisation and took a critical attitude towards the cult [setta]."

The word "setta" (like the rather offensive "protestantico") occurs again twice in the following paragraph, and many more times in the text. On the following page (p. 21), Introvigne has something quite kind to say about what he would doubtless have subsequently labelled as the "atrocity story" of a "professional enemy": "Therefore, on May 22, 1980, Raymond Franz resigned from the Governing Body, to which he had belonged for nine years, and discovered he had to start a new life, without any personal experience or academic degree, since he had

devoted all of his previous existence to activity as a full-time Jehovah's Witness." On p. 22, we even read the following:

"The personal events of Raymond Franz' life have an interest which goes beyond the individual case of the author of *Crisis of Conscience*, since they bring out the cultic spirit [*spirito di setta*] which inspires the entire organisation of the Jehovah's Witnesses and which drives them to strike out systematically and ferociously against any inside dissenter, without feeling the need to provide arguments or explanations. His is certainly a partial view; however, on the basis of the documents which he presents any reader with some experience of law will find it hard not to share the conclusion that 'every right is on the side of the accusers, and the accused have no rights at all.'"

Introvigne then tells us what the "cultic spirit" ("spirito di setta") is all about: "On the contrary, the law and the court system inside the Jehovah's Witness organisation, show the cultic spirit in its most typical character, which consists of denying explanations to members and in imposing decisions which have no rational motives and are not argued rationally." (p. 23) The cultic spirit and totalism go hand in hand; Introvigne compares Jehovah's Witnesses with Communism and National Socialism: "Gnostic totalitarianism — as the organisation Raymond Franz describes 'from the inside' shows — appears no less clearly in the cult [setta] of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the structure of which is a seminary and a model of totalitarian organisation, based on millennialist beliefs, which claims to grow and impose itself on the world by constantly increasing its 'converts.'" (p. 38) This is what Introvigne then had to say about "apostates".

Nine years later, Introvigne, writing in the right-wing daily *Il Secolo d'Italia* (Massimo Introvigne, "I nuovi movimenti religiosi", *Secolo d'Italia*, November 22, 1996), would say: "Just because of the totally offensive meaning which the word 'cult' [setta] has taken on, a synonym in public opinion for a socially dangerous group, university studies on this issue have by now largely abandoned it, replacing it with the more neutral expression 'new religious movement' and 'new religion.'" Introvigne of course is quite right about the perils of the loose use of the term: in its pre-CESNUR days, *Cristianità* used to speak of "la setta comunista" and even "la setta abortista".

Just like the more recent version, the early Mr Introvigne was not working separately from his organization. Not long before

Introvigne's attack on the "Jehovah cult"; the March-April 1984 issue of *Cristianità* devoted a full page to a meeting, "also sponsored by Alleanza Cattolica", on "A cultic [*settaria*] presence in Sicily: Jehovahism", and held in Palermo. Of course Introvigne, not yet being an expert on the issue, was not among the speakers. "Apostates" played a leading role in the meeting: "Testimonies of pain for so many victims of Jehovahism, and a feeling of liberation after having left the Jehovaist organisation, were expressed by three former members of the cult [*setta*], who, describing their own stories, showed how it is always the weakest who fall into the trap of psychological suggestion, of a new Manicheism and of feelings of hatred for all those who are not, and above all for those who cannot be, initiated." ("Una presenza settaria in Sicilia: il geovismo", in *Cristianità*, March-April 1984, p. 8)

In another conference (again, Introvigne is not listed among the speakers), held in Massa Carrara in 1983 "to deal with the expansion of the cult", Alleanza Cattolica pointed out how Jehovah's Witnesses use their theology for purposes of practical exploitation: "One interesting feature of the 'practice' of the Jehovah's Witnesses is how they manage to finance their propaganda operations: having laid down the principle that the follower belongs entirely to the association, they have succeeded in setting up a publishing venture which can count on virtually free labour, with some very obvious advantages in terms of profit!" ("Un convegno di studi sul geovismo", in *Cristianità*, April 1983, p. 12)

On April 25, 1985, as *Cristianità* proudly related under the usual heading of "the good fight" (*Cristianità*, May 1985, n. 121, p. 13), AC organized a meeting in Matera on "Catholic Truth and the Jehovaist cult" (*Verità cattolica e la setta geovista*). Speakers included Ernesto Zucchini, later involved in CESNUR, but also the "testimonies of two former members of the cult [*setta*]: Dr Achille Aveta, who some years ago left the Jehovah's Witnesses, an organisation which he had belonged to since his childhood, denouncing the doctrinal forgeries and the totalitarian nature of the Jehovaist structure, and Dr Walter Palmieri, whose speech showed the difficulties in the path back to Catholic truth for those — and they are many — who leave the cult [setta]." In the afternoon, a professor of law touched upon an issue which Introvigne would find untouchable only a few years later: the legal aspects of the rules of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

In the June-July 1985 issue of *Cristianità*, Alleanza Cattolica was still organizing meetings denouncing Satanic cults ("Il demonia-



co luogo teologico, fenomeno sociale, categoria storica", in Turin, June 11, 1985; although Introvigne lives in Turin, he is not mentioned in the article). Therein the "journalist Gianluigi Marianini presented the results of his inquiries into the worrisome presence of Satanists in Turin...and showed how an increasing number of people are led into Satanic cults [sette sataniche] from apparently harmless astrological circles, through magic and spiritualism." Any reader of Introvigne's writings will recognize all the marks of the "anti-cult movement" — "sensationalizing journalists", "confusion between different kinds of new religions", and the "abusive use of the term cult" — in one paragraph. Introvigne, apparently not yet an "expert" on such matters, was not a speaker at either of these meetings. Yet only a few years later, Introvigne could proudly boast that he was one of the few non members to be regularly invited to attend black masses in Turin. (see Maria Grazia Cutuli, "Il diavolo è fra noi", *Epoca*, September 28, 1993)

Perhaps rightly, the scholar Introvigne in recent years defended the Catholic pentecostal-charismatic group Renewal in the Spirit against the accusation of being a cult (*Cristianità*, n. 269, September 1997, p. 9); however, in the same issue of the same magazine, we learn that the believer Introvigne gave the introductory speech at a convention of the same organization, called "When the Son of Man Returns, Will He Still Find Faith in the World?" Things were quite different back in 1977, when the May issue of *Cristianità* devoted an article to the same group. The author of course was not yet Introvigne, but Pellegrino Costa. The quotation marks in the title say everything: "'Catholic' pentecostalism — towards 'tribalization' of the Church?" ("Tribalization" being an oblique reference to Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira's notion that the Church in Latin America was being "tribalized" by progressive missionaries). Typically, the essay starts out with the words: "In the third Italian edition of the essay *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, the author, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, identifies 'Catholic' pentecostalism as one of the symptoms of the Fourth Revolution inside the Church." Catholic pentecostals are compared to a long list of ancient heresies and associated with the US drug culture of the '60s. Finally, they are diabolical:

"This, in brief, is the pentecostal doctrine: however, destroying reason and rejecting the guidance of the Church means falling prey to the imagination and to diabolical deception, which is always present. Thomas Aquinas teaches that the

devil can act on man's imagination and outside senses, can create prodigies thanks to the excellence of his angelic nature, and can induce perceptible tenderness and sweetness in order to lead uncautious souls to perdition. Pentecostalism, with its irrational manifestations and superstitious rites, certainly favours this operation by the devil on its followers." (p. 7)

Very obviously, an enormous change in Introvigne's thinking took place somewhere between 1985 and 1988, when Introvigne was already expressing the same conspiracy theories about the "anti-cult" movement he still holds today.

### When Introvigne's Friends were into "Deprogramming"

Introvigne often tries to prove his main point — that no legal steps should be taken against cults — by noting the fact that the Italian courts decided that the law against *plagio*, roughly "undue influence", cannot be applied to them, as the notion is too general. Indeed, one of Introvigne's favourite jokes is based on a typo in the French parliament's report on cults, where "plagio" was referred to as "piaggio": "The legal part of the report mentions 'the existence in Italy of the crime of 'piaggio' [sic], or brainwashing. 'Piaggio' is a well-known Italian brand of motorcycles. The crime of plagio — similar to brainwashig — was created during the Fascist regime and was removed from the penal code many years ago — in 1981 — by the Constitutional Court, as being contrary to the Italian Constitution" (G. Cantoni & M. Introvigne, *Libertà religiosa, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione'* [Piacenza: Cristianità, 1996], p. 124). However, Introvigne prudently leaves out the history of how Italian courts came to such a decision. The reader should take note that this statement by Introvigne appears in a book co-authored by the "regent" of AC and published by *Cristianità* in Piacenza, a very small town in northern Italy which happens to be where the headquarters of AC are located. This location is no coincidence.

In the 1960's, two young brothers in Piacenza fell under the spell of Aldo Braibanti, a self-proclaimed homosexual, Marxist and atheist all in one. Agostino Sanfratello, the elder brother, became a militant leftist, but was then called up for military duty. This break from Braibanti's influence supposedly allowed him to get his own ideas back. Giovanni, the other brother, on the other hand, went to live with Braibanti. The worried parents, together with Agostino, tracked down the place where the two were

living. They swept up Giovanni, packed him into a racing car and locked him up in a psychiatric clinic (November 2, 1964). Court documents refer the testimony of one of the kidnappers: "We managed to drag Giovanni to the bottom of the stairs... during the trip, Giovanni continued to move, saying 'Four people against one!'...Braibanti started to have a nervous attack, shouting 'Giovanni, don't go!' I held Braibanti, and at a certain point his glasses fell off." (quoted in Eco Moravia et al, *Sotto il nome di plagio* [Milano: Bompiani, 1969], p. 45) In other words, a classic deprogramming, exactly as Introvigne, speaking critically of deprogramming, would himself write many years later: "'Deprogrammers', on instructions generally from a member's parents (and at their expense: a 'deprogramming' today costs between twenty and forty million Lire), kidnap the member of a new cult, keep him in an isolated place and use a series of methods — ranging from enticement to threats, and sometimes including physical violence — until the subject gives in and forswears his cult membership." (Massimo Introvigne, *I nuovi culti: dagli Hare Krishna alla Scienza della Religione* [Milano: Mondadori, 1990], p. 194) The deprogramming was followed by a trial against Braibanti, accused of plagio, who was sentenced by what was certainly quite a prejudiced court of Catholics and anti-Communists. The trial, in 1968, provoked a great mobilization by intellectuals against the law.

The fascinating aspect of the case is that Agostino Sanfratello himself founded Alleanza Cattolica in the wake of the trial — the very movement Introvigne is proud to be a leader of was founded on an episode of deprogramming. Indeed, almost the only case of deprogramming in Italian history. During the Braibanti trial, the opposite sides were very clearly drawn: on the one hand, conservative, anti-Communist Catholics; on the other hand, the very same "secular humanists" Introvigne now claims favor deprogramming. Although Sanfratello later dropped out of the organization, briefly becoming a Lefebvre seminarian, the national offices are still in Piacenza.

### Alleanza Cattolica and Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property

To understand why Introvigne and AC made a 180-degree turn around the end of 1985 on cult-related issues, and why the former suddenly discovered his vocation as a "sociologist" and an "expert on New Religious Movements", requires a long explanation.

What is Alleanza-CESNUR's "good strug-



gle"? What are the ideas that these young men in suits and ties should wave their flags for? The self-description of AC, on its own homepage, is an elegant combination of soft (and complicated) speech and tough contents. It calls for a "positive and apologetic, hence also polemical, propagation and the implementation of the social doctrine of the Church, the application of the perennial natural and Christian moral system to changing historical circumstances. Its action lies in the field of Christian implementation of the temporal order; it is moved by political charity." Now, Introigne is either a bad member of AC (but their official magazine certainly does not seem to say so) or else CESNUR is here to do "political charity"; building, as the web page goes on to say, "a civilization which can truly be called Christian, as it respects divine rights and lives consciously within the boundaries laid down by the doctrine and morals of the Church." The hope for a historical implementation of such a civilization is supported by the Virgin's promise at Fatima: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart shall triumph". The jargon is heavy, but so are the contents: we are not talking about individuals living within the framework laid down by Christian "doctrine and morals". We are talking about a whole society governed by Canon Law. And this appears as a dream for the immediate future, thanks to the help of the Virgin in setting up a new "civilization".

In the meantime, while waiting to put society into the "frontiers" of the new civilization, AC pays special attention to fighting "those forces which aim at reversing the Ten Commandments and at implementing doctrinal and moral lies, with a special reference to the historical process which goes from the crisis of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation to Socialcommunism and beyond, that is the Revolution which seeks to be enthroned in the place of God and His law." In other words, the enemies of AC (and CESNUR) range from Michelangelo to Luther, Marx and "beyond".

Whatever one may think of Alleanza Cattolica's ideology, the organization is by no means a cult. It has no charismatic leadership, and its 200-300 members are free to pursue their own studies and personal careers. Personal opinions within the group vary, within a limited range, of course. No exacting demands in terms of money or time are made on members, and those who leave the organization are in no way victimised. Although the comparison would hardly please the leadership, it is not unlike Freemasonry — somewhat secretive, but basically an association of free, consenting adults. AC was founded in the wake of the Sanfratello-Braibanti deprogramming case.

However, the reason why it grew was far more important: the dramatic suffering of many Catholics whose whole worldview was shattered by Vatican II.


At least since the counter-Reformation, the Catholic explanation of reality was quite clear: all of Adam's descendants were stricken by original sin, whether this inevitably led to damnation or not; only the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross opened up a possibility of redemption through sacraments properly administered by a regularly-ordained priesthood. Liberal critics will probably comprehend only the reactionary political ideas of the organization, but the theological and sacramental aspect was probably even more important: ecumenism and the reform of the liturgy, often ruthlessly imposed by the very authorities who traditionalists expected to be there to preserve the heritage of the Church, shook the very foundations of the meaning of life for many people, who found themselves in a situation not unlike that of Native Americans when the buffaloes disappeared from the prairies.

When the world breaks down, an explanation and a ray of hope are needed in order to avoid total psychological collapse. "Counter-Revolutionary" theories, like the Ghost Dance of Native Americans or the expectation of the Messiah among Jews after the loss of their political independence, provided both. Such "Counter-Revolutionary" theories, which date back to the times of the French Revolution, provide an explanation of the world in terms of progressive decadence and dissolution, leading to an ever more dramatic crisis. The divine order of the world progressively turns into global confusion and breakdown and then into nothingness: a remote Golden Age in the past, where men, nature and God (or the gods — Counter-Revolutionary thought is often "neo-pagan") lived in harmony, like a great symphonic orchestra, finds its opposite in the solitary desperation of Internet fans clicking their way through everything and nothing.

This means that every "revolutionary" movement is considered an enemy, which of course is a more attractive notion for the middle class than for factory workers, but it would be wrong to see it simply as a mirror of class interests: genuine political interests need optimism and flexibility, and few powerful businessmen in Europe will waste their time financing pessimistic and extremist Counter-Revolutionaries; reactionary interests and reactionary idealism are by no means synonymous. Indeed, we can find similar attitudes contrasting "order" and "chaos" in quite different environments, from optimistic Freemasonry and even the more romantic aspects of Communism, to the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The situation is different, however, in Latin America, where the old landowning "aristocracy" has for centuries claimed religious authority for its right to exploit the labour of people whom God, they hold, made subordinate to them. In this remote corner of the world, reactionary interests and reactionary idealism go hand in hand. And AC's ideology — or Introigne's ideology — comes directly from Latin America.

#### Alleanza Cattolica Acknowledges its Debt to "Dóctor Plinio"

 AC is proud to publish Plinio's writings in its magazine:

"[Plinio's] writings were often published again abroad, especially by the magazines of the several TFP's. In Italy, they appear in the monthly *Cristianità*, official voice of Alleanza Cattolica, and in the *Quaderni di Cristianità*, published every four months." ("In memoriam: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira", *Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 6)

Here is a fuller statement on the relationship between AC and TFP, as expressed in AC's official magazine:

"Alleanza Cattolica, neither founded nor directed by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, refers in the issues it deals with to the counter-revolutionary magisterium he expressed during his life on earth...From the testament of the Brazilian Master, Alleanza Cattolica has reason to expect a more effective help from his eternal life at this end of the century, which is also the end of a millennium, in view of a new century, which is also a new millennium. Finally, it shares with him the profound belief that the new century and the new millennium cannot but be a Christian century and millennium, a Marian century and millennium; as well as the hope, nourished by the promise of Fatima — 'In the end, my immaculate heart will triumph' — of a great and socially relevant conversion, and hence, of a restoration of Christendom" (*Ibid*, p. 7)

The complicated reference to the "millennium" reveals, in parochially correct language, Plinio's fantasies about a coming Middle Age.

The internet site of IDIS (the more political offshoot of AC) hosts a page, written by Giovanni Cantoni, "reggente" of AC, devoted to "Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (1908-1995): a life for the Church and the Christian civilization":



"Outstanding among Corrêa de Oliveira's works was the creation of the spiritual family of the TFP's, and hence the fatherhood over them; these are civic associations of a Catholic inspiration, which in their very name are a reminder of a basic feature of social life, tradition, and of two equally basic institutions of the same, the family and private property; these organisations use pacific methods to promote such values among public opinion and fight against the cultural revolution which aims at overthrowing them."

It is a small world after all: the IDIS internet page also hosts an article by Introvigne exclusively devoted to attacking the "anti-cult movement".

The "spiritual family" of TFP is active in 26 countries — Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Spain, Italy, France, Poland, Germany, the Philippines, South Africa, India, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Peru, Portugal, Paraguay, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Venezuela; however, the "family" includes many different local branches — for example, in Italy, besides TFP itself, there are AC and Centro Lepanto, each with a great many sub-groups.

**When Heresy was "blasted with execration"**

**I**n the coming "Kingdom of Mary" which this peculiar organization sees as being just around the corner, there will be little room for the "professional study" of what Introvigne calls "new religious movements". According to Plinio, the "Order born of the Counter-Revolution must shine forth" in terms of its "constant care in discovering and fighting evil in its embryonic and hidden forms, blasting it with execration and branding it with infamy, punishing it with inflexible rigour, especially as far as any efforts against orthodoxy and purity of customs are concerned; all of this in opposition to the liberal metaphysics of Revolution and its tendency to give free rein and protection to evil." These words are taken from Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Rivoluzione e Contro-Rivoluzione* (Italian edition), p. 126, which is of course advertised in *Cristianità*. As *Cristianità* tells us, "*Revolução e Contra-Revolução*, written in 1959, is the basic text of TFP, and provides it with the foundations of its doctrine and action." (*Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 5)

Quite similar words appear in *Lepanto* (June 1991), the organ of AC's sister-group, the Centro Lepanto:

"Kings and governors must make sure everybody observes the Divine and evangelical law...Authorities must make sure the laws of the Church are obeyed as well...This means that rulers must abhor and persecute no vice more than heresy in their states...Since the spiritual arms of the Church are not always sufficient to achieve this result, rulers must help the Church to drive this idol out of the Temple of God, cutting off the head and the palms of both hands, as with a dragon (1 Kings 5:4), so it can no longer speak, act or prevail."

The authoritarian agenda of TFP is therefore evident, and is in marked contrast to the remarkably tolerant views Introvigne now displays toward "new religious movements", including those which most Catholic traditionalists would consider heretical.

### **"Doctor Plinio" and his "Counter-Revolutionary Magisterium"**

**A**lthough the AC web page makes no mention of this fact, its ideas are not original. They are based on the "counter-revolutionary magisterium" of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a Brazilian professor who founded an organization, which claims to constitute the "true" right, called Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), that was set up in the context of the bitter struggle by landowners against agrarian reforms. But it also had the more ambitious aim of destroying the "Revolution" and setting up a universal Christian monarchy. In Costas-Gavras' film on the Montevideo kidnapping of a US diplomat, the Tupamaros also kidnap the Brazilian consul, who was guilty of tortures in his home country: one of the accusations against him is his TFP membership.

A June 1997 roundtable in Rome revealed the way that TFP, CESNUR and AC work together. Massimo Introvigne and Giovanni Cantoni (both the "rector" of IDIS and the "regent" of AC) presented the book *Libertà religiosa e legislazione anti-sette*, co-authored by them; a prominent speaker was Juan Miguel Montes, "director of the [Italian] office of Tradition, Family and Property." (Francesco Pappalardo — himself an AC member — "Sette, il grande equivoco", in *Il Secolo d'Italia*, June 29, 1997, quoted in *Sodalitium*, December 1997, p. 68)

"Doctor Plinio" ("doctor" refers to the "Doctors of the Church"), like many other such figures, has an explanation for everything, so we might presumably call his theory a form of "sociology". It certainly is where Introvigne gets his sociology from (in fact, on its internet site, the AC offshoot IDIS

says that Master Plinio "is the author of sociological and historical studies"). The following quotations, which describe the world view of our Brazilian author, are all from the preface to *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. More to the point, they are not taken directly from Doctor Plinio's book, but from an article published in *Cristianità*. ("La devozione mariana e l'apostolato controrivoluzionario", in *Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 9 ff.) In other words, they are thoughts Introvigne certainly is proud to share:

"God created Man in a happy, hierarchical world, where most obey and some give orders. However, if a person gives in in some way to the vices of pride and impurity, an incompatibility will begin to arise within him with different aspects of the Church and the order of the universe. This incompatibility may start, for example, with a dislike for the hierarchical character of the Church, then extend to and affect the hierarchy of temporal society, then finally the hierarchical order of the family...Impure Man generally tends towards liberalism: he is irritated by the existence of an order, of breaks, of a law reigning in the overflow of his senses...The result of pride and of liberalism is the desire for total equality and freedom, which is the basis of Communism... The struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution is basically a religious struggle...It is easy to see the role that the Virgin plays in the struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution...Mary is the Universal Mediator, the channel through which all grace flows. Therefore, her help is indispensable for preventing the Revolution, or for the triumph of the Counter-Revolution over the Revolution...Devotion to Mary is the *sine qua non* condition for crushing the Revolution and for the triumph of the Counter-Revolution... The Revolution is not only the result of mere human wickedness. It is the latter which opens the gates to the Devil, allowing itself to be excited, exasperated and directed...The role played by the Devil in the explosion and progress of the Revolution has been enormous."

The cult of Mary, in TFP, revolves largely around a statue of the Virgin of Fatima which supposedly wept in New Orleans before being bought by Doctor Plinio, which the organization calls the "Holy Statue", and which Plinio claimed used to provide him with precious information on the world situation. (see *Tradizione Famiglia e Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?*, [Rimini, 1996], p. 31) The prophecies of Fatima are of course crucial for Catholic mil-



lennialists, as they paint exactly the picture of apostasy and imminent catastrophe, followed by the mysteries of the "Third Secret", which such people already see...

Obviously reminiscing on what must have been quite unhappy childhood memories, Plinio explains:

"Let us imagine the director of an institute with very rebellious students, whom he punishes with an iron authority. After having brought them back to order, he withdraws, telling his mother: 'I know you would run this institute differently from me. You have a mother's heart. Now that I have chastised these students, I want you to govern them with sweetness...The role of the Virgin as queen of the universe is similar.'"

It is an interesting commentary on Scientology's listing of CESNUR as a "human rights resource" to see that at this point, Master Plinio says:

"When the Church sings of Her: 'You alone have exterminated the heresies of the whole universe', it is saying that Her role in this extermination was, in a way, unique. This means She directs history, because the director of the extermination of heresies is the director of the triumph of orthodoxy..."

"This and other considerations taken from the teachings of the Church open up the perspective of the Kingdom of Mary, that is of a historical age of faith and virtue, which will be inaugurated by a spectacular victory of the Virgin over the Revolution. At such a time, the Devil will be driven away and will return to his hellish den, while the Virgin will rule over mankind through the institutions she has chosen."

One can now begin to see through some of the more obscure statements Introvigne makes whenever he writes about millennialism.

The institutions the Virgin will choose to rule over mankind will most definitely not be democratic. During this coming age, which closely resembles that of the Jehovah's Witnesses, greater saints will arise than at any time in history. However, the Kingdom will be preceded by the "bagarre", roughly, "the troubles". Doctor Plinio's teachings about this "bagarre" have been summarised as follows:

"Plants will bleed; there will be a fight between angels and demons, and the TFP militants, surrounded and helped by angels, will become the instruments of

conversion or condemnation. They will then lead public campaigns to denounce evildoers. Then the good, after having been converted, will gather around TFP". (*Tradizione Famiglia e Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* [Rimini, 1996], p. 35)

One interesting consequence of this future Kingdom will be that priests will no longer be needed; at least according to the former TFP followers, this is the real meaning of Plinio's following statement:

"The Kingdom of Mary will therefore be a time when the union of souls with the Virgin will reach an intensity without any precedent in history, of course with individual exceptions. What form will this supreme union take? I know of no more perfect means of implementing this union than sacred slavery to the Virgin, as taught by Saint Louis Grignion de Montfort [more on him later] in his *Treatise on True Devotion to Mary*." ("La devozione mariana e l'apostolato contro-rivoluzionario", in *Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 15)

Sacred Slavery (*schiavitù santa*) implies a "total consecration to the Virgin as a slave":

"This consecration is of an admirably radical nature. It includes not only the material belongings of man, but also the merits of his good deeds, his life, his body and his soul. It has no limits, since the slave, by definition, owns nothing. In exchange for this consecration, the Virgin works inside her slave in a marvelous fashion, setting up an ineffable union with him." (*Ibid*, p. 15)

Since of course the Virgin is not a legal person, slavery vows are made, in her stead, to TFP. Only in certain cases, however, does this imply total obedience to the TFP leadership: the practice, as performed in AC at least, is only a picturesque and secretive ceremony, no more demanding than, say, a Masonic initiation.

The saints in Plinio's Kingdom will, of course, be the TFP members themselves rather than ordinary Catholics:

"The fruits of this union will be seen among the Latter Day Apostles [...]. The extraordinary men who will fight against the Devil, for the kingdom of Mary, gloriously leading the struggle, until the end of time, against the Devil, the world and the flesh, are described by Saint Louis [Grignion de Montfort] as magnificent models who invite those who, in these

dark days, are fighting in the ranks of the Counter-Revolution to perfect slavery to the Virgin." (*Ibid*, p. 15)

One can well understand why the militants who would come to receive his blessing had to prostrate themselves in front of Plinio with their foreheads touching the ground; they would then kiss the armchair Plinio usually sat on (*Tradizione Famiglia e Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* [Rimini, 1996], pp. 63-4).

## TFP Meets with Problems

TFP considers itself to be engaged in a mortal conflict with the Left. It consequently tends to depict any trouble it may get into simply as the violent reaction of the "Revolution" against its heroic opponents, a notion which Introvigne has translated into the fiction of the "anti-cult movement". Actually, opposition to TFP has come mostly from parents of TFP members, themselves usually Catholic traditionalists, and from conservative and traditionalist Catholic quarters. There are several reasons for this.

In the first place, outside of Latin America, TFP generally keeps a low profile or operates through front organizations which the left usually does not notice. Skinhead-scalpers will turn elsewhere when they find a group like TFP, whose writings are difficult to read, which is generally unobtrusive, and which was founded by a man who sympathized with the British conservatives during the War (so much so that TFP took a pro-British stance during the Falklands War). TFP always viewed Fascism, with its optimistic cult of the State and the Nation, as a deviant form of "revolutionary socialism". Another reason is that TFP is actually far to the right of virtually every other right-wing organization. Whatever feelings people may actually harbour deep down, I know of no other right-wing organization which publicly holds that the rich are better than the poor. Even the most extreme Catholic traditionalists tend to blame the modern world on plots hatched by "International Freemasonry" or on "the banker Mafia", whereas TFP puts the blame squarely on the rebellious poor, to whom it opposes its self-styled "rightism". The third reason is doctrinal. Catholic traditionalists have problems with the "official" Church because of its supposed doctrinal deviation; but TFP, due to its Brazilian origins, is only interested in fighting agrarian reform, not in defending Church doctrine, which is why it was able to accept Vatican II and the reform of the liturgy. After all, the Pope has more battalions than Monsignor Lefebvre ever had. Also, Plinio's denial of the future role



of priests — and the current exclusion of priests from all the more secret aspects of the group — led Monsignor Castro de Mayer, for decades Plinio's patron among the Brazilian bishops, to state: "TFP is a heretical sect since, although they do not say so in words or in writing, it lives and acts according to a principle which undermines the very basis of all true Christianity, that is the Catholic church". (*Tradizione Famiglia Proprietà: Associazione cattolica o setta milenarista?*, [Rimini, 1996], p. 6)

More than its political character, it was this highly suspect theological nature of the group which led to its condemnation by the Council of Brazilian bishops: "During its 23rd plenary assembly, the Council of Brazilian bishops approved a note concerning the 'Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property', advising Catholics not to join the above mentioned Society...Its esoteric character, its religious fanaticism, the personality cult of the founder and of his mother, the abuse of the name of the Virgin Mary...can absolutely not be approved of by the Church." (*Osservatore Romano*, July 7, 1985, p. 12, n. 408, weekly Spanish edition quoted in *ibid*, frontispiece)

The terms "cult" or "sect", with their double meaning of "deviant religious behaviour compared to an institutional religion" and a "closed totalist group", are certainly ambiguous. But this condemnation of TFP reveals why the organization was certainly considered by some to be a "cult" in the first sense of the word; and why therefore this same organization took a special interest in the issue of "cults" in 1985, i.e., exactly when Introvigne too started involving himself in this matter. Former TFP members have written that Plinio was well aware of this association. Referring to cult accusations, he used to tell them: "This must not come as a surprise; since you belong to TFP, you will be treated as if you belonged to a cult by your very parents and friends! It will be terrible, and it will be hard indeed to stay faithful." (*Ibid*, p. 38)

### Introvigne's Debt to Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

**W**e have already seen how in the past Introvigne rarely wrote an article without taking a quote from Plinio Corrêa's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. In public, he rarely mentions the "Doctor" today. However, Plinio's influence still appears in many ways.

For example, although Introvigne generally writes rather clearly, his writings on the Solar Temple will probably seem incomprehensible to most people. Apart from the fact that he is quite obviously trying to protect

every other cult from the fallout, what is he talking about? Something about the Knights Templars and the Second Revolution (with capital letters) eating their own children...Actually, the text is perfectly comprehensible to any reader who happens to have read Plinio's writings, but to no one else. Of course there are hundreds of cults (and other, quite innocent groups) with much the same Templar mythology and homeopathy mix as in the Solar Temple — it is only when they get on the bad side of the press that Introvigne tries to show that the criticisms are something out of the French Revolution.

This leads Introvigne to explain away the Solar Temple while saving Moon, Scientology and the like:

"The tragedy of the Solar Temple now represents — together with elements of homicide, also present at Jonestown — the suicide of another Revolution, the II Revolution, marked by relativism in its 'pure' Enlightenment form, not yet in its 'reformed' and aggressive social-communist form. Both tragedies also take place within the cultural framework of the IV Revolution, and this perhaps helps to drive small groups who are living the II and III Revolution in a panic and monastic manner. The sinister flashes of the electronic 'bonfires' of the Solar Temple thus light up a centuries' old path, and represent the apocalypse, not of religion — nor, in this case, of 'new religions' — but, in terms which are both grand and diabolic, of relativism." ("La tragedia del Tempio Solare: il suicidio di una Rivoluzione", in *Cristianità*, November 1994, p. 16.)

We can see where AC picks up the term "socialcommunist"; the Second Revolution refers to the Enlightenment and to the French Revolution, the Fourth to modern "decadence". According to Introvigne's complicated expressions, the Solar Temple was the fault of Voltaire, and Jonestown was the fault of Karl Marx. Waco, on the other hand, was a "Christian holocaust", as Introvigne titled an article in *Cristianità*, June-July 1993.

Introvigne's explanation of Jim Jones, a regularly ordained Protestant pastor who set up a quite typical American cult before leading his followers to their Jonestown doom, is much simpler: they were Communists, and Communists do that sort of thing. Introvigne, who claims that this event was the "extreme conclusion of a Marxist itinerary carried to its most logical consequences," even speaks of "Soviet advisors" at Jonestown — one wonders whether they were there to kill off their own comrades, or

to commit suicide themselves: "Jonestown, however, was the suicide of a Revolution which — to use the words of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira — we can call the III Revolution, the socialcommunist Revolution." (*ibid*, p. 16.)

His earlier article "Il suicidio della Guyana fra mito e storia" (*Cristianità*, n. 162, October 1988) is typical of his method. Full of bibliographical footnotes, it looks quite convincing until one analyses its actual content. The first subtitle is quite explicit: "The 'anti-cult movement' and the myth of the 'suicide cult'." He is clearly more interested in dealing a blow to his personal enemies than in analysing Jonestown. He first describes the "anti-cult movement" in the same terms that recur in every other of his works on cults, saying that the anti-cult movement believes that "cult brainwashing" [sic] led to the mass suicide in Guyana.

He then goes on to demonstrate that Reverend Jones' group was actually Communist. Whether true or not, this proves nothing whatsoever. Introvigne knows that the "anti-cult movement", insofar as one can speak of a coherent set of ideas in such a mixed bag of organizations, holds that cults may be religious, commercial, therapeutic or political, and that it is *the deed and not the creed* that matters. Introvigne is well aware of this, as he repeatedly criticises this notion elsewhere. Indeed a leading cult critic, Janja Lalich, writes about this on the basis of her experience in a Marxist-feminist group. The question posed by cult critics about Jonestown is entirely different: can a closed group, whatever its ideology, create such a conditioning atmosphere as to lead its followers to commit a mass suicide, or was the mass suicide simply a sum of nearly one thousand simultaneous free decisions taken by men, women and children? Introvigne's conclusion provides no answer to this vital question: "The mistake made by the anti-cult movement, perhaps involuntary in 1978, becomes clearly deliberate in 1988, after ten years of research and whole libraries of documents proved, to anybody willing to refer to them, that the People's Temple was not a religious group, but a socialcommunist movement." ("Il suicidio della Guyana fra mito e storia", in *Cristianità*, n. 162, October 1988, p. 11)

### TFP is Accused of Being a "Brainwashing Cult"

We have seen how TFP already fell under the suspicion of being a "cult" or "sect" from a religious point of view. However, it also fell under this suspicion from a sociological point of view. TFP first met with considerable problems in France, where the



organization set up the "Ecole Saint-Benoît" in 1977, a private school at Châteauroux, attended exclusively by the children of Catholic traditionalists, and run by a group of TFP militants. TFP first tried to explain away unexpected changes in the behaviour of several students by calling them "individual cases". In a meeting in 1979, the parents, the chaplain and the teachers all discovered that such cases were anything but individual, and asked TFP to cease running the school. The parents, teachers and chaplain, together with several students, drew up a fascinating booklet on the organization and its methods (reprinted by Catholic traditionalists as *Tradizione Famiglia Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?*).

As with many similar groups, they discovered that TFP gradually teaches its militants not to think: "You think too much: this is a temptation from the devil", is the expression a Brazilian director used when speaking to a doubting Frenchman; typically, "over-thinking" is blamed ideologically on René Descartes. Secrecy, environmental control, and constant trips to Brazil are features of the indoctrination practised by the organization. Another interesting feature, according to the French parents and priests, is the constant denigration of all other Catholic traditionalists, who are generally accused of "white heresy", meaning "revolutionary behaviour"; "black heresy", in contrast, refers to "revolutionary thoughts". In the loaded jargon of the group, TFP militants are taught to speak of their parents as "F.M.R." or *fontes minha revolução*, the "sources of my revolution"; however, parents can atone for their revolutionary tendencies by financing the movement. "It is typical to see how, when 'attacks from the family' come, militants refuse to reason with their parents; they smile and say 'I knew it was coming.'" (*ibid*, pp. 22-3) Young members are taught to manipulate their parents — as Doctor Plinio used to say, "The game you must play with this or that person is the following..." (*ibid*, p. 23)

The decisive year for understanding Alleanza Cattolica's (and Introvigne's) switch-over from attacks on the "Jehovaist cult" to equally fierce attacks on the "anti-cult movement" is 1985. TFP had actually been outlawed in Venezuela in 1984. What interests us are not the facts in themselves, but the way TFP viewed them. The immediate (and rather unlikely) reason was that the organization was supposedly plotting to assassinate the Pope. This happened shortly after a former TFP member (but certainly a loner) had tried to kill the Pope at Fatima in Portugal. However, in a typical scenario, many worried parents of TFP members got involved in the issue, and TFP was mainly

accused of "being a cult".

The episode is described in *Bollettino delle 15 TFP*, Year I, n. 5, dating from around mid-1985. The title is significant: "Socialist rage strikes TFP-Resistencia". As usual in such cases, the whole episode is blamed, not on the Asociación Civil Resistencia, the local TFP organization, but on the government: supposedly, it was TFP's campaign against a socialist law passed by the ruling party which provoked the government's attack on the group. Also typically, we do not hear what the government's accusations against TFP were, but only the defence of TFP against a "series of persecutions", "a violent persecution", and a "the most intense and total propaganda campaign imaginable". What is of especial interest is TFP's claim that a "minority of parents of co-operators of Resistencia, frightened by the confusion or driven by ideological motives, took part in the libellous campaign against their own children." (*Bollettino*, p. 11) After the outlawing of the organization, the adult members — many were minors — left Venezuela together with their families. However, the document of the Parliamentary Commission calling for the outlawing of TFP said: it is a cult and not a religious group [*es una secta y no un culto*] of the far right which goes against the family, warps the minds of young people, turns its members into fanatics and brainwashes them." (private information from a Spanish friend) This statement coincides with what TFP itself said: "Resistencia, according to these slanderers, was supposed to be a 'cult' which, as such, practised 'brainwashing.'" (*Bollettino*, p. 12)

#### TFP's Reaction: The Invention of the "Anti-Cult Conspiracy"

As we can see, TFP was under fire as a "cult" or "sect" in both senses: as a small, heretical religious group, and as a closed group practising mind control. It ran into problems from theologians, parents and former members, in much the same way as, say, Scientology.

Many former members of the organization had started to reveal controversial aspects. TFP reacted by publishing a text, by Gustavo Antonio and Luís Sérgio Solimeo, with the significant title: *The New Atheist and Psychiatric Inquisition Calls Those They Wish to Destroy 'Cults'*, [Paris: Société Française pour la Defense de la Tradition, Famille et Propriété, 1991], a translation of a 1985 Spanish text). In the same year, TFP in Columbia published a booklet called *Brainwashing: What is it? A Machiavellian Device? Satanic?*, which of course quoted various sources to deny that "brainwashing"

existed. Fighting this "new inquisition", which was attributed — in the first text mentioned above — to "an alliance between socialist politicians and Freudian psychiatrists", called for coalitions even with those whose fate in the future Middle Age will be "inflexible punishment", that is, with other groups accused of being cults. This also involved the invention of a non-existent enemy: the "secular anti-cult movement", which supposedly operated for ideological and anti-religious purposes. Of course cult critics do exist: but in virtually every case, their organizations were founded by people with an immediate family problem and no ideological agenda of any kind. Also, "psychiatrists and socialists" know very little about TFP: the most well-documented criticisms come from Catholic traditionalists who belong to the same milieu of people.

I have not been able to track down the two early TFP booklets I mentioned, so I do not know in what relationship they stand to a booklet I have been able to get hold of, which is of decisive importance for understanding the whole issue of Introvigne's war on the "anti-cult movement". The book I have, *Brainwashing: A Myth Exploited by the New 'Therapeutic Inquisition'*, dates from what we have seen to be the decisive year: 1985.

### "Brainwashing": A Myth Exploited by the New "Therapeutic Inquisition"

The American Society for the Defense of  
Tradition, Family and Property

The Foundation for a Christian Civilization

Although still in a relatively primitive form, this booklet contains every idea that Introvigne would later develop: it is indeed quite obviously the very archetype of all his future writings. The only difference is that it does not claim to be a work of academic scholarship. Like most extremist publications, it is anonymous, being signed merely by "The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) and the Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Inc." The frontispiece also specifies that "this study has been published in Colombia and Brazil." It is not easy to understand the origin of this text: although the contents are definitely from the USA, the book is a trans-



lation from Brazilian Portuguese.

The text is divided into two quite distinct parts: a foreword by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, setting down the ideological guidelines for the war against the "anti-cult movement", and a larger part, anonymous, which is mainly a collection of quotes from various personalities which all tend to prove that something called "brainwashing" does not exist. These quotations, as we see, are somewhat insubstantial; but they do pose a question: how did this Brazilian organisation suddenly manage to find so many quotations from US scholars in its very first foray into this field? A Brazilian expert on Fatima prophecies would not even know where to look for such items as an article by Faber, Harlow and West in *Sociometry*, vol. 20, no. 4, December 1957, pp. 271-285, to quote a typical bibliographical reference. This is merely a hypothesis, but one does suspect that this text was largely copied from some other publication by a US group, perhaps the Unification Church, which had had much more experience in rebutting accusations of being a cult. It would probably not be difficult to track down the original. Certainly, none of these ideas were new: TFP merely adopted a method for responding to critics which had been applied for years in the USA by people with far greater access to legal or intellectual resources.

The foreword by the Doctor, in its very title, clearly lays down the approach which Introvigne would still be following over a decade later: "Brainwashing and Cult: Two Indefinable Catchwords That Are Paving the Way for Worldwide Tyranny and Religious Persecution". A series of "extravagant" organisations are supposedly arising around the world: "The desire to halt the criminality engendered by some organizations and to preserve modern society from the influence of groups whose professed goals, while not criminal in themselves, differ dramatically from those generally accepted, has generated a widespread anticult movement that is especially active in the United States". (p. 7) Here we can see where Introvigne picked up the term "anticult movement" from. Plinio tends to make a complete separation between a minority of delinquent groups, and others which are simply repressed because they are, as he repeatedly puts it, "extravagant":

"A much more sensitive issue is that of the legal repression of cults which are simply extravagant and which, by themselves considered, do not tend to engender criminality; in such cases they would be acting within the law...From the standpoint of the secular and neutral mentality of modern society, if someone were to wear a tri-

corn hat in public, a normal thing in the time of Louis XV, or walk down the street wearing the shoes of a maharaja, how would he violate the current concepts of law? And if two or more persons were to put on unusual clothes and stroll through the streets singing nonsensical verses, would their action be censurable if their singing did not disturb the peace or violate good customs? By maintaining that the state should legislate on extravagant behavior such as this, the anticult movement raises many delicate and complex legal questions — all, note well, with implications in the moral and religious order...Under the pretext of preventing extravagance, the modern state would claim the right to form, define and impose an official opinion on almost every aspect of human life, along with the right to repress all those who did not live or think according to that official opinion." (pp. 8-9)

Obvious, of course...except that no movement against "extravagance" actually exists. No cult critic, for example, has ever complained that Scientologists wear tricorne hats. The complaint, whether justified or not, is that they take your money.

Like Introvigne in his critique on Jonestown, Plinio adds:

"Curiously, there are anticult organizations that have extended their attacks in every direction but that of socialism and communism. Why do they not consider them philosophical cults? Why do they not consider any of the aberrations of the hippie and rock movement extravagant (even though these movements are openly Satanic in many of their rituals)? Why? It is symptomatic that they frequently lash out against the enemies that communism seeks to overthrow. It is impossible not to conclude that, in the practical order, these anticult groups pave the way for communism and lead to global totalitarianism. Thus, these anticult organizations and socialism/communism appear to be complementary." (p. 10)

The false reasoning here will be obvious to anyone who has even the slightest knowledge of the so-called "anti-cult movements". In the first place, "socialism and communism", like fascism or the Catholic Church, do not fall within the rather strict criteria used to define a cult. Second, cult critics have always taken note of those Communist, Catholic or other movements that do fall within such criteria. This is the reason why certain Marxist-Leninist groups or Opus Dei, but not the Church or Communism in gener-

al, have been targeted (whether rightly or not is a completely different issue). The rock movement is of course not targeted simply because it is "extravagant", and can hardly be considered a "mind control cult".

Plinio then proceeds to discuss "brainwashing":

"In the United States, the term brainwashing has had a profound impact on public opinion. It was first used in 1950 by journalist Edward Hunter, Jr., in a series of articles for the *Miami Daily News* and the *Leader Magazine*, wherein he described the tortures to which Americans were subjected in the Korean War when they fell into enemy hands." (p. 11)

Put this way, it seems as if a journalist invented the word. Actually, "brainwashing" arose as a positive term in Communist China, *hse nao*, although it was introduced into the West by Edward Hunter in his book *Brainwashing in Red China*. However, already in 1956 — almost thirty years before Plinio penned these lines — Robert J. Lifton had introduced a new term, "thought reform" (also of Chinese origin), and by around 1980 the term "mind control" had come into common usage. Margaret Singer, one of the leading cult critics in the USA, introduced the rather clumsy expression, "systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence" in 1982 (see Margaret Thaler Singer, *Cults in Our Midst: The Hidden Menace in Our Everyday Lives*, [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994]). Of course Plinio may well be forgiven for not knowing this; however, these facts are important since the "anti-cult movement" generally made a clear distinction between "brainwashing", that is the violent imposition of a change of opinion under conditions of physical duress, and methods of "thought reform" based on the systematic use of every possible psychological key for maintaining control over individuals, but without the use of physical constraint. Journalists of course continue to use the term "brainwashing", but "anti-cult movements" rarely do, or did back at the time Plinio wrote these passages. I do not intend here to take a stand on this complicated issue, but Plinio is clearly fighting a false enemy.

By attacking brainwashing, Plinio is attacking a straw man: brainwashing means physically coercive manipulation. Since there is little opportunity for Chinese-style physical coercion in modern Western cults, the entire theory of "brainwashing" is wrong. The problem with this is that any sensible cult critic would agree with him. Indeed, psychiatrist Louis Jolyon West is quoted favourably in the booklet as a critic of the



notion of "brainwashing". What the writer forgets to say is that West is certainly one of the leading critics of cult control. A rather different issue is whether social environments can be extremely persuasive; entirely apart from the whole issue of cults, any attempt at denial here is bound to be fruitless. An obvious, if extreme, example were human sacrifices among the Aztecs: whether the individual priest actually enjoyed driving in his obsidian knife, there exists little doubt that he was socially convinced that it was a highly moral thing to do, and indeed that not doing so would be a seriously immoral deed.

However, as we have seen, "brainwashing" (*lavado de cerebro*) was certainly an explicit accusation launched against one group: Plinio's own TFP. The real reason for Plinio's sudden interest in "brainwashing", "cults", and the "anti-cult movement" emerges, with an Introvignesque deviousness, only at the end of his foreword. After saying that the only solution for "extravagant behavior" is to bring the lost sheep back "into the fold of the Holy Catholic Church", he says:

"This ideal, for which we fight, provides yet another important reason why this study was prepared

and published. In union, not only the communists themselves, but also their 'useful innocents', the leftists of all shades and especially the 'Catholic leftists' classify many Catholic groups faithful to the traditional teachings of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church as 'cults'. Adding insult to injury, they accuse such Catholics of using 'brainwashing' on their proselytes. The object of this work is, then, to repulse this offensive and to disarm those who have launched it: the communists and their 'fellow travelers' and 'useful innocents.'" (pp. 12-13)

Plinio's real agenda could not be expressed more clearly.

The greater part of this booklet, as we have said, is devoted to quoting criticisms of

the notion of brainwashing, or at least of its relevance to present day cults. One quote is quite startling; however, before launching accusations of bad faith against the TFP writers, it should be remembered that this is probably merely a reprint of material collected by others. On page 18, the booklet includes a long quote from *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* by Robert J. Lifton, which denounces the abuse of the term "brainwashing" in contexts other than that of physical constraint. What the collector of this material apparently did not know is that this critique was part of Lifton's proposal for using an entirely different terminology to describe non-violent manipulation, or that Lifton's suggestions provided the theoretical groundwork for the entire "anti-cult movement's" reflections on persuasion and (as the term later developed) mind control. Even Introvigne had to acknowledge this fact, without however betraying Doctor Plinio's orders: these conflicting demands have led him to speak of "second generation brainwashing theories".

#### Introvigne's Role in Plinio's War

#### on the "Anti- Cult Movement"

This booklet proves that TFP was already upholding the same

line of cult apology three years before they found a "sociologist" to create an organization for this purpose. In 1985, sexologist Introvigne was still attacking the "Jehovaist cult". In 1987, sociologist Introvigne published *Il reverendo Moon e la Chiesa dell'Unificazione* (Torino: Elle Di Ci), the first book in his war on the "anti-cult movement". After all, even a recent curriculum (in *Libertà religiosa, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione'*, p. 150) admits that it was only "in the second half of the 1980's" that Introvigne became a specialist in "contemporary 'new religiosity'." May we suggest that Introvigne's sudden transformation around 1985 had a close relationship to this campaign by TFP?

There are several reasons for thinking that this was no coincidence. First of all,

Introvigne's switch-over was not individual: the same symbiotic relationship between AC and Introvigne existed before and after the switch-over. And the switch-over involved all of AC, which very clearly changed its policy on cults in the same radical manner. Secondly, Introvigne's writings can all be read as an extensive series of footnotes confirming the original thesis by "Doctor Plinio" on "cults and brainwashing". However much he may have written, none of his subsequent work shows the slightest deviation from these guidelines. Thirdly, in his more intimate writings in *Cristianità*, Introvigne quite clearly reveals the strategic nature of cult apology, presenting it as a necessary weapon in the struggle against the "Freudian and Marxist anti-cult movement" and to protect Opus Dei and other groups (TFP is only mentioned rarely) against "persecution". There is nothing unusual in TFP affiliates taking up the "Doctor's" instructions and applying them around the world.

Documents may of course be quoted out of context to design almost any scenario; however, I believe I have quoted the documents correctly, in

their context, and have not missed any important information to the contrary. Of course, publicly available documents are only the last, and the

least authentic, step in a long process: crucial decisions are never taken in magazines. However, the documents which are available seem to confirm a statement repeated by several former members of AC (who, by the way, were not "socialized" into any "anti-cult substructure"): that Massimo Introvigne decided to found CESNUR as the result of a trip he took to Brazil. Trips to Brazil, as the booklet *Tradizione Famiglia Proprietà: Associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* shows, play a very important role in preserving the social cohesion of the organisation.

Not having been a member of TFP myself, I cannot say whether it is a cult. What is however obvious is that TFP has gone through the same experiences as groups like Scientology and the Moonies



have: problems with parents and relatives of members, and accusations of secrecy, duplicity, manipulation, being personality cults, and aggressive proselytism. And the reaction has been exactly the same: to put the blame on an imaginary "anti-cult movement" run by "psychiatrists". Presumably, TFP decided to pick on such an unlikely enemy, since attacking the Catholic Church would have dried up their source of idealistic young Catholics (before espousing Introvigne's theories, New Acropolis founder Jorge A. Livraga put the blame on Opus Dei and the Vatican's fear of the "giant of history", meaning the tiny organization NA); while attacking governments is, of course, an unwise policy anywhere. Once this ideological picture has been drawn, everything must be fitted into it.

Anybody who knows anything about cult monitoring organizations, knows that nearly all of them were founded in order to solve a problem: that of grieving parents and disoriented former cult members. In this sense, cult monitoring organizations closely resemble other self-help groups set up by people whose lives

have been destroyed. If such groups have any prejudices, these are typically parents' spontaneous prejudices — they are not ideological

in any way, and every cult monitoring movement includes people with the most diverse ideas, whose common problem is far more important to them. At least in Italy, a large majority of the members of what Introvigne calls "anti-cult movements" are practising Catholics, but ideological/theological issues are never discussed in any such movement I know of.

However, Introvigne tells us how we "must" approach cult monitoring organizations:

"One must always start out from the basic ideological reference framework of the anti-cult movement, born in a secular humanist (*laicista*) environment which is unable to stand any social phenomenon which seems to belie the thesis that the

fate of religion is to progressively lose its importance in a modern and post-modern world which basically does not need it anymore. It should be added that...the secular humanist ideology almost always (although exceptions do exist) goes along with liberal and left-wing political militancy, as opposed to the politically conservative militancy of the new evangelical and fundamentalist Protestantism, as well as of some new religious movements, especially the Unification Church of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, at least until recent years." (Introvigne in "L'Opus Dei e il movimento anti-sette", *Cristianità*, May 1994, pp. 6-7)

Note, however, that psychiatrists are not always enemies. In *Cristianità*, a certain Bruto Maria Bruti suggests psychiatric treatment as the solution for the "vice" of homosexuality, quoting about as many academic sources as Introvigne usually does, and speaks of such things as the third interstitial nucleus of the frontal hypothalamus ("Omossessualità: vizio o programmazione biologica?",

in *Cristianità*, July-August, 1995).

### Some Odd Friends of Introvigne

TFP's

open-armed ecumenism takes on surprising aspects. According to the French journalist Serge Faubert ("Le vrai visage des sociétés secrètes", *L'Evenement du jeudi*, November 4-10, 1993, pp. 44 ff.), Introvigne was one of only fifteen founding members of a very secret Group of Thebes (Groupe de Thèbes) which used to meet at the headquarters of the French Grand Orient and was made up exclusively of leaders from various "Orders". The tiny group included quite an interesting variety of individuals:

- 1) Massimo Introvigne, who attended the very first meeting of this lodge, on June 3, 1990.
- 2) Rémi Boyer, a former Rosicrucian (AMORC) who had created Arc-en-ciel

["Rainbow"], a federation of occult and New Age groups (including Sri Chinmoy, the Grande Loge Indépendante des Rites Unis, the Institut pour une Synthèse Planétaire, the Ordre Chevaleresque de la Rose-Croix, the Spiritual University of Brahma Kumaris. The Groupe de Thèbes was Boyer's second creation, for a smaller, and presumably higher, group of "initiates".

- 3) Jean-Pierre Giudicelli, leader of the French section of the Order of Myriam, former Corsican nationalist and right-wing militant (in Ordre Nouveau and then Troisième Voie).
- 4) Gérard Kloppel, world Grand Master of the Order of Memphis and Misraim.
- 5) Jean-Marie Vergério, leader of the "Templars of Circe".

- 6) Kotzamanis, chancellor for Greece of a Templar group (it is not clear from Faubert's article whether

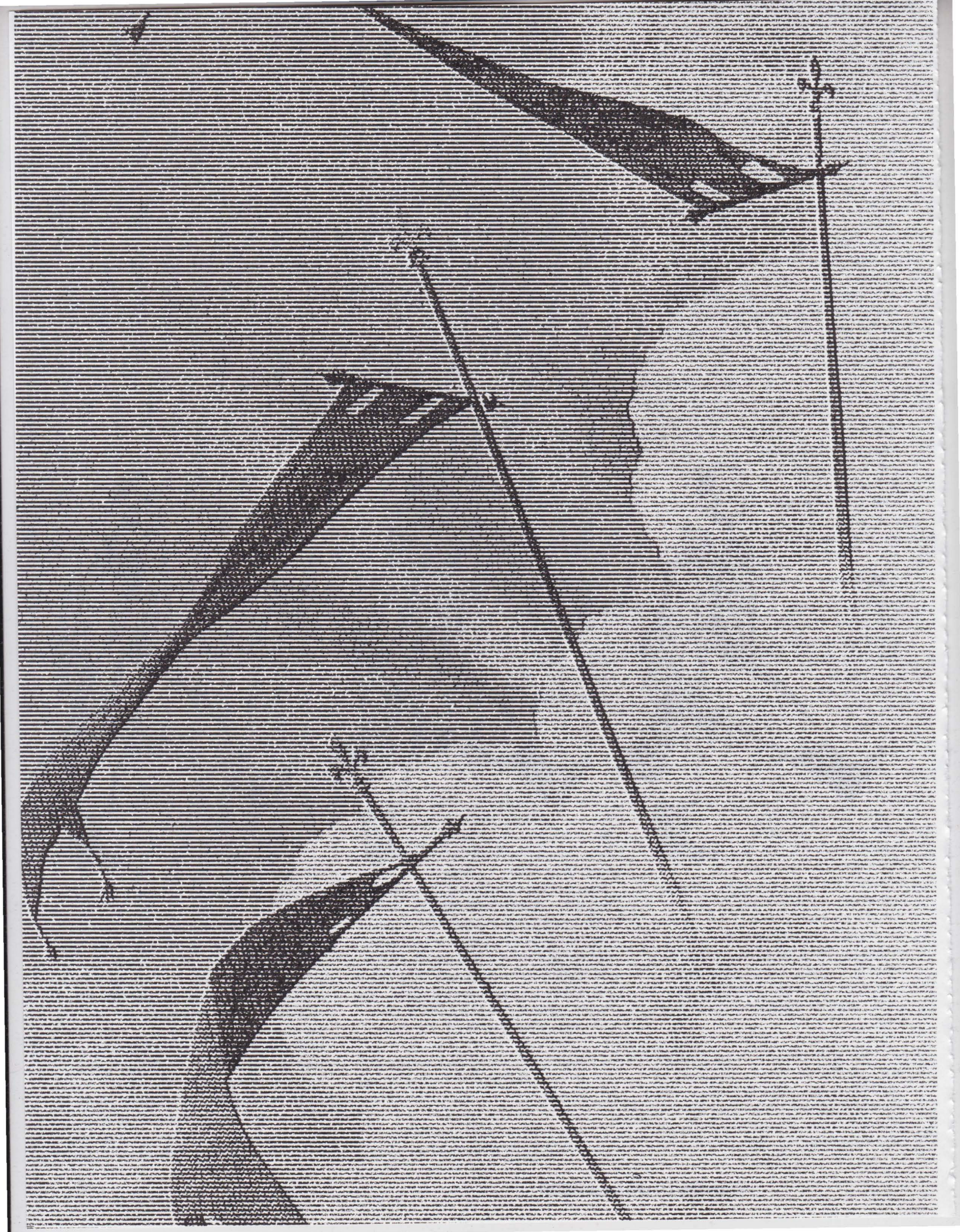
Triantaphyllos is his first name or the name of the group).

- 7) Christian Bouchet, the

most interesting member of the Group of Thebes (as a militant atheist, Bouchet prefers to be called by his surname only).

Bouchet was a prominent speaker at several CESNUR events: at the international CESNUR conference at Santa Barbara in 1991, and four times in France in 1992. This is rather amusing in the light of CESNUR's claim to represent "professionalism" and "serene discussion". I have no idea whether Bouchet has any professional qualification beyond being a follower of Aleister Crowley (he does call himself an "ethnologist", unlike "sociologist" Introvigne). Bouchet, who has been a militant in the French far right since the 70's, runs three separate magazines. For the general public, there is *Lutte*







*du Peuple*, "People's Struggle", a rather hysterical publication which many people might qualify as "neo-fascist"; then there is *Vouloir* ("Will"), a cultural publication largely devoted to studies on Nietzsche and Crowley; however, initiates have access to *Théléma*, which means "Will" again, but in Greek: Thelema of course is Crowley's famous slogan. Bouchet was once a member of the Crowleyite OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis). However, the Treasurer General of Ordo Templi Orientis, Bill Heidrick, kindly advised us that Christian Bouchet was expelled from the O.T.O. in 1992 without having passed beyond the First Degree.

Bouchet's political and religious opinions are of no interest to me here; what does interest me is how a person like Bouchet can be fitted into the kind of "serene" and "professional discussion" CESNUR supposedly stands for. Here, for example, is a short review written by Bouchet: "The first CD of the indus [industrial music] group Dissonant Elephants, 'Our eyes like daggers', has a lot that appeals to us: ...the dust jacket shows the toad of Jerusalem on his cross with a red clown's nose." ("Vient de sortir", *Lutte du peuple*, September-October 1995, p. 13) The reference is to Aleister Crowley's notorious toad-crucifying ritual.

Bouchet appeared again in a conference on the "Roots and Evolution of Contemporary Paganism" in Lyon (February 3 and 4, 1996), where other speakers included Robert Amadou (a well-known Martinist); right-wing extremists Arnaud d'Apremont and Charles Antoni, and Rémi Boyer (again), as well as Renato del Ponte, an expert on Julius Evola. Massimo Introvigne, "director of CESNUR", was the star of the conference. The comments of a participant at this conference clearly show the kind of image Introvigne has succeeded in projecting on his work — instead of hiding his own ideological affiliation, he indicates that "although a Catholic", he is "forced" to objectively defend certain groups; at the same time, he is an academic expert:

"Introvigne is a Catholic, something which he has never hidden...his studies are of an exemplary objectivity and impartiality...Yet it may come as a surprise to see how Introvigne accepted an invitation to a conference which did not possess those requirements of 'scholarship' or 'seriousness' which he, as a scholar, must certainly appreciate. Introvigne himself realized how his presence could have caused some surprise...in his first speech, [he] explicitly said that accepting an invitation to a conference on neo-paganism where 'neo-pagans' were expected to speak, was 'not only a pleasure, but a

duty', since the [recent] report of the [French parliamentary] commission of investigation had described neo-paganism as socially dangerous since it was widespread among racist and anti-semitic right-wing circles." (Marco Pasi, "Esoterismo e nuova religiosità", in *Orion*, March-April 1996, pp. 51 ff.).

Of course, nothing is ever entirely bad: Introvigne's activities in defence of the large cult multinationals certainly help to make life easier for eccentric but innocent groups which have as much right to exist as any other and which are profoundly grateful to this "Catholic scholar"; some of the young witches who feel honoured by the presence of such a great figure are very decent people. However, the gratitude of these minor movements is certainly not what keeps CESNUR running, nor are these admirers aware of the fate that awaits them should TFP's millennialist imaginings come true one day.

The articles of association of the Group of Thebes seem to have excluded any non-initiates from membership. This of course is of no consequence to me; however, it does cast some doubt on Introvigne's right to call himself a Catholic, considering the Church's strict condemnation of freemasonry. Four members of this Lodge, besides Introvigne himself, took part in the CESNUR conference in Lyon in 1992. As usual, Introvigne avoided replying to these accusations; a reply was however written in a bulletin reserved for AC members only (*Domus Aurea Informazioni*, 5/10 September 1994, quoted in *Sodalitium*, n. 39, November 1994, pp. 20 ff.) which accidentally leaked out. Introvigne claimed that he had written over fifteen books and accused Faubert of being a "communist militant of a small Trotskyist group", but did not deny membership in the Lodge. He also claimed to have the right to be called a "sociologist", since "until 1993" (this sounds better than "in 1991 and in 1992", as stated in his curriculum in *Libertà religiosa*, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione') he occasionally used to teach Sociology of Religion courses in a seminary in the provincial town of Foggia (the archbishop of which was at the time president of CESNUR). Introvigne admitted that the leakage of inside information about the Thebes Group caused "objective harm to the scholars participating in the meetings of the Group."

Introvigne was not always so friendly towards the French "Nouvelle Droite", from which Bouchet comes, perhaps because Doctor Plinio had not yet provided his own new guidelines. Basically, his thesis in the past (Massimo Introvigne, "GRECE e Nouvelle Ecole", in *Cristianità*, n. 32, Dec. 1977) was that the French "New Right" was

actually leftist. Under the subtitle, "A stand-by ruling class for the Revolution", we find the following description of these French "neo-pagans": "A 'cocktail' of evolutionism, neo-positivism, scientism, sexual revolution and clearly Masonic doctrines in an 'Indo-European' package: in the first place, in order to subtly corrupt those young people who escape from social-communist and progressive conformity, favouring their transformation into 'anonymous revolutionaries'; in the second place, in order to prepare the pollution of any anti-Communist reaction and to try to satisfy its inevitable spiritual needs in an anti-Catholic and anti-metaphysical sense, in view of a dark and fatal neo-pagan mirage." (p. 5)

### Why CESNUR Dislikes Cult Critics

TFP has some very good reasons for disliking cult critics. Read the following statements by two critics to understand why Introvigne devotes so much time and effort to attacking what he calls "anti-cult movements". Both statements come from Spain, where TFP calls itself Covadonga, in remembrance of a Christian victory over the Muslims. Here is the first:

"The TFP cult, at least in Brazil, maintains a paramilitary structure of warrior-monks, called the 'sentinels of the West', who go through tough paramilitary training and wear a habit with a chain as a belt (they learn to use this as a weapon) and high military boots, they make vows of silence and regularly practice flagellation. This 'army' is made up of highly fanatical and violent young people". (Pepe Rodríguez, *El poder de las sectas* [Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1989], pp. 233, 245, 246)

And here is the second:

"Carlos Manuel Arbues is 22, the son of a widow, and his maternal grandfather was a Communist leader in the [Spanish] Republic. At home, I was always fed anti-militarism, atheism and non-conformity; this is why, when I was fifteen, I was fascinated by uniforms, medals and the like. We were four friends, bully boys, small leaders in our neighbourhood, where we liked to show off our strength. One day, a group of youths came into our street bearing 'standards and singing hymns and shouting loudly. They let us go with them. They were going to a demonstration, and were carrying chains and a lot of books and propaganda leaflets: yes, the rosary would save us, yes, Masonry and



Communism were corruption...we did not care what they believed, we were interested in the symbols of the organization and the fights they got into every day.

But, did not you realize you were getting into an entirely fascist organization?

At home they told me this. My mother left me without an allowance, and my other friends used to laugh at us, but all this only served to increase our appetite. We were enrolled and we began to attend the meetings.

For young people, Covadonga regularly stages study weeks and specialized anti-Communist training courses (SEFAC), consisting of lectures, study groups, theatrical performances, visits to historical monuments dating from the glorious epoch of Spain; mountain hiking and karate are practiced, and excursions and recreational camps are held. [This quote seems to come from an official Covadonga publication].

OK, but that is not so bad.

I have no idea exactly how true either of these stories is; even if they are, they probably leave out a good deal. Both these stories have all the limits of journalistic simplification. Of course, they are no worse than the kind of testimony *Cristianità* regularly used to publish about Communist or Palestinian "atrocities". However, one can well understand why Introvigne likes to explain away "apostates' narratives". The girl, one can imagine, lost her eye because Carlos Manuel Arbues was "socialized into an anti-cult sub-structure".

That Introvigne's theories about "apostates" have a purpose different from "sociology" behind them is not something I myself was the first to claim. It is something that Introvigne himself wrote, as directly as a lawyer can write, in a critique of Gordon Urquhart's book, *The Pope's Armada*, a critical but well-documented study of Opus Dei, Focolarini and Neocatechumenals, and of María del Carmen Tapia's reminiscences of her own life in Opus Dei. The article was of course written in *Cristianità*, which is so little read that Introvigne probably hoped to keep the secret inside the family.

Why should the testimony of "apostates"

*Cristianità*, n. 260, December 1996, p. 5)

Translated, this means that Introvigne's purpose is to "defend the Catholic faith seriously", and that in order to do so one must defend every controversial Catholic group. It is easy to detect here an implicit appeal for solidarity to all Catholic groups on behalf of TFP.

This means ruling out "uncritical acceptance of what 'ex-members' have to say" (our experience shows that Introvigne rules out any acceptance at all of their testimony), even if this means that "we shall no longer be able to use the same theories" for non-Catholic cults. By "quantitative criticism", "sociologist" Introvigne means sociological interpretations, which must be replaced entirely by the "religious criticism of doctrines": for example, by discussing thetans with Scientology's hard-sell staff or historical cycles with Moon's factory managers.

I do not wish to deny the value of conversions, but a theological discussion is not possible so long as there is no shared language and no shared values. One could imagine a discussion on the meaning of a Bible verse with a Jehovah's Witness, as such a verse would be

That is what it was like at the beginning, and we felt very manly, with our ranks and insignia, but after awhile we were no longer ourselves, we no longer thought about anything but what our leaders said, they kept us under their rule. Until finally, one day...

Go on, what happened?

They sent us to 'provoke' a Communist Party meeting at Casa de Campo, I won't go into details, because it disgusts me; I hit a girl in the eye with a chain, and I saw blood come out; my comrades struck people and laughed, and I ran away. When I got home, there was a dramatic scene: the girl was the daughter of a cousin of mine, and had lost her eye. I left them, but I also had to leave the neighbourhood and my family, and I am no longer myself. I hate them and am attracted by them at the same time. It is just like being hooked on drugs." (Pilar Salarrullana, *Las sectas* [Barcelona: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 1990], pp. 98, 100)

be swept under the carpet? Introvigne is absolutely explicit:

"If we want to go to the heart of the matter, we must question the very premises of books like those by Gordon Urquhart [founder of the Focolarini movement in the U.K.] or María Carmen Tapia. Of course, there is a price to pay for this: once we have rejected uncritical acceptance of what 'ex-members' say, theories on 'brain-washing' and the quantitative definition of 'cult' for Focolarini, Opus Dei or Mother Teresa of Calcutta's sisters, we shall no longer be able to use the same theories even if we want to criticize the Jehovah's Witnesses or the followers of Reverend Moon. Maybe this is not too bad: even with these groups, years of experience have shown that quantitative, non-religious criticism is a waste of time, whereas it is only when we take the doctrines of the new religious movements seriously and criticize them on a religious level, that we can defend the Catholic faith seriously." (Massimo Introvigne, "'Sette cattoliche': l'equivoco continua", in

acceptable as a foundation for both parties, but there is no foundation for discussion when there is no shared starting point. It is only the human and not the cultural element which a priest and the follower of an esoteric group, for example, have in common. So the common ground is not theological, but lies in understanding the person standing in front of us, his dependencies, and what ties him to his group from a human (and hence sociological and psychological) point of view. A theological dialogue can only start afterwards, when the individual becomes aware that he can make his own choices.

Massimo Introvigne, as his CESNUR/AC colleague Ermanno Pavesi (a psychiatrist, by the way) points out in a 14-page article in *Cristianità*, offers this way of distinguishing groups:

"A doctrinal typology which distinguishes various waves of new religions, according to their relationship with the Catholic view of the world and with its characteristic elements: the Church, the unique role of Jesus Christ, God, the religious feeling as a specific way of relating



with the sacred." (Ermanno Pavesi, "La psichiatria e i movimenti anti-sette", *Cristianità*, March 1997, p. 13, quoting from M. Introvigne, "Autoguarigione e autoreddenzione," in *Salute e salvezza: prospettive interdisciplinari*, edited by Ermanno Pavesi [San Giuliano Milanese: Di Giovanni, 1994], p. 66; it is worth noting that this whole issue of *Cristianità* contains only one other article)

This is an approach that would be entirely legitimate for a Catholic priest, but which has no relationship whatsoever to sociology. Introvigne's repudiation of sociological approaches likewise skillfully moves Opus Dei and similar organizations (meaning, above all, TFP) out of the spotlight: since their doctrines are more or less Catholic, any Brazilian farmer who finds himself at odds with TFP should therefore limit himself to discussing the Trinity! While I do not intend to express any opinion about Opus Dei or other such organizations, it is quite clear that such a "theology-only" or "doctrine-only" stance will win TFP quite a few powerful friends among a variety of groups confronted by similar problems.

## Sources

Very little critical material exists on TFP, and we would be glad for any suggestions. Only a few articles come from where criticism would be most likely: the political Left. An internet page in Portuguese by the "landless" movement, some critical material from Spain and an excellent but sectorial study by a professor at Durban University in South Africa (where, under the apartheid regime, TFP "celebrated religious freedom", as Introvigne would put it, by having the progressive Catholic review *New Nation* outlawed), are all that a quick search through the Web could locate. There have also been a few interesting articles in the French press.

The best sources we know of are two booklets published by Catholic traditionalists:

1) *Tradizione, famiglia, proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* (1996).

2) Carlo Alberto Agnoli & Paolo Taufer, *TFP: la maschera e il volto*.

Both are available only from Priorato Madonna di Loreto, via Mavoncello 25, 47828 Spadarolo di Rimini, Italy, tel./fax 0541-727767 — 728335. The first booklet is a very interesting analysis of the organization and includes the testimonies of several former TFP members. The second is heavily conditioned by the authors' conspiracy theories, with which I personally disagree. However, the booklet contains many interesting quotes from TFP material.

Several very well-documented articles were published in the traditionalist Catholic review *Sodalitium*, as a reaction against Introvigne's locating these ultra-orthodox Thomists, in an article on "new religious movements", somewhere between the Moonies and the Satanists. Introvigne had the bad taste of doing so in an article in the Italian Masonic publication, *Ars Regia*, published by the "brother" Mauro Mugnai. (*Sodalitium* n. 35, October-November 1993); a review in which Introvigne's name figures as "scientific consultant" for the publishers).

Other interesting material came out in a debate in *Orion*, an Italian magazine generally labelled as "right-wing", where both pro- and anti-TFP voices can be heard

(*Orion*, c/o Libreria del Fantastico, via Plinio 32, 20129 Milano, Italy).

However, the most interesting material on TFP comes from the horse's own mouth:

Roberto de Mattei, *Il crociato del secolo XX: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira* (Casale Monferrato: PIEMME, 1996), a book which I believe has been translated into several languages).

This biography of the Leader proudly boasts about what most people would consider the most disreputable aspects of TFP: the photographs in this book are alone enough to put Introvigne out of business. A look at the footnotes will show that de Mattei, besides being the leader of AC's sister organization, the Centro Lepanto, is also a great Introvigne-quoter. And the quotes he cites go directly to the point: they all defend Master Plinio.

Another important source reflecting TFP's views is a website called "SOS fazendeiros", where a coalition of landowners — "faithful to the mission of defending Tradition, Family and Property and to the thinking of their

eminent founder, Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira" — calls for the suppression of the farmers' movements in Brazil (<http://www.sos-fazendeiro.org.br/>).

## Notes about the articles published here

Anybody can understand that the most interesting criticism against Introvigne and Alleanza Cattolica can only come from those who know them well: Catholic traditionalists and other elements of the so-called radical right. This is why I quote from the magazines *Sodalitium* and *Orion*. These publications do not even deal with "new religious movements", and therefore cannot reasonably be considered supporters or followers of the "anti-cult movement".

Besides darkly suggesting that I might be a secret agent for the Belgian Parliament, almost the only defence Introvigne has employed so far against my critique of his work is to make use of the fact that right-wing magazines criticise him in order to claim that he himself is not a right-wing extremist. However, the real reason why certain elements on the far right criticize him is

quite different: the more orthodox Catholic traditionalists have many reasons to oppose a movement which they consider millennialist and to some extent esoteric, whereas the more secular and pagan components of the radical right understandably object when a "reactionary" Christian group like Alleanza Cattolica attempts to influence and colonize their milieu.

Therefore, *Sodalitium* and *Orion* know well — thanks to a partial affinity of interests — the ideological background to which CESNUR's members belong: the group Alleanza Cattolica, whose activists can be also found among many representatives and members of the Center for the Study of New Religions managed by Massimo Introvigne (the Italian leader of AC and founder of CESNUR); and the right-wing organization TFP, originating from the "counter-revolutionary teachings" of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and highly esteemed by Alleanza Cattolica. Consequently, we deemed it appropriate to utilize and cite *Sodalitium* and *Orion* on the basis of their competence in these matters. This choice had nothing whatsoever to do with the ideological approach of *Sodalitium*



and *Orion*, which we consider irrelevant to the issues we are discussing; here, we are much more interested in the facts than in the ideas upheld by the publications which originally housed these articles.

*Sodalitium* [1], the official organ of the Institute Mater Boni Consilii, is run by Catholic traditionalists who can boast a direct and personal knowledge of AC and its activists. This journal, whose editor is Don Francesco Ricossa, is printed in Turin and distributed free of charge to anybody making a request. *Sodalitium's* editorial staff has been writing about Alleanza Cattolica — and particularly Massimo Introvigne — since 1993 [2]).

*Orion* [3], on the contrary, is dedicated to politics and not to religion. It is a “third position” neo-fascist group influenced by the so-called “anti-globalist front”, and it has shown a certain open-mindedness by skillfully hosting contributions of a diverse nature. Right-wing groups are often subject to strong criticism by *Orion's* contributors, as can be seen in the article on TFP and its connections with Alleanza Cattolica.

Finally, in the way we have shown above, we tried to focus on CESNUR from different point of views in order not to limit our field to the perspective offered by the scholars who explicitly analyse the question of “new religious movements”.

## Notes:

[1] *Sodalitium*, periodical. Loc. Carbignano, 36. 10020 Verrua Savoia (Turin). Telephone: 0161/839335; Fax: 0161/839334.

[2] *Sodalitium* has published 6 articles: “Massimo Introvigne e la Massoneria” (n. 35, pp. 13-18); “Introvigne: dalle messe nere alla Gran Loggia” (n. 38, pp. 44-47); “La ‘smentita’ di Massimo Introvigne” (n. 39, pp. 20-28); “Tra esoterismo e devozione, ovvero: relazioni pericolose di alcuni devoti...” (n. 42, pp. 65-68); “Tra esoterismo e devozione. Le relazioni pericolose continuano...” (n. 43, pp. 46-52); and “Alleanza...Massonica?” (n. 46, p. 64-76).

[3] *Orion*, magazine, Edizioni Barbarossa, Società Editrice Barbarossa, C.P. 136, 20095 Cusano Milanino (Milan)

*Miguel Martinez was born in Mexico but grew up in Italy. At the age of 20, he joined a political-esoteric cult known as New Acropolis, becoming one of its leaders. He established several branches of this organisation in Italy (Siracusa, Piacenza, Milan), and was then appointed “National Commander” of the organisation for Egypt. He left the group in 1990, and then obtained a degree in Oriental Languages and Literature (Arabic and Farsi) from the University of Venice fol-*

*lowing the completion of a thesis comparing the pre-millennial dispensationalist approach to the holy places of Jerusalem with that of radical Islamism. He has written for several publications dealing with social, political and religious issues. Texts of his, currently awaiting publication, deal with the revisions and applications of the thinking of Helena P. Blavatski; with so-called “Christian Zionism”; and with the relations between “cultural memory”, politics and power in the Western approach to the Near East. For the full text of the manuscript published above, and for much more information on CESNUR, see his CESNUR “critical page” website:*

[www.kelebekler.com/cesnur](http://www.kelebekler.com/cesnur)

## “Introvigne, Science and Ideology”

by Alessia Guidi

The website of the Rome branch of the Catholic cult resource GRIS recently published an interesting interview on the Swiss radio with two well-known scholars who deal with issues related to New Religious Movements (NRMs): Dr Raffaella di Marzio and Massimo Introvigne, director of the Turin-based CESNUR (Centre for the Study of New Religions).[1] I carefully read what the latter said, and compared it with what I found in a booklet I had just discovered, called *La questione della nuova religiosità*, by Massimo Introvigne, published by *Cristianità* in 1993 (ISBN 88-85236-14-6). This made for some very interesting reflections on the actions and statements of CESNUR's director.

First, let us look at what he told the Swiss Radio:

“Question: Professor Introvigne, before answering criticisms, would you like to tell us what the premises of your research are?”

Massimo Introvigne: Social science scholars speak of an approach which is independent from the personal values of the researcher, and attempts to describe a situation without basing oneself on the doctrinal position of the scholar. For example, I am Catholic and I could say that a movement is far from the Catholic faith. However, this is a task which I gladly leave to the theologians. In the same way, a person with ideological positions, for example a secular humanist [*laicista*], could not say that the worldview of a movement that is opposed to the secular and rationalist view which he believes in should be promoted. I think these two kinds of approaches — in social sciences

they are called ‘religionist’ and ‘ideological’, respectively — have a legitimate field of application in polemical writings, but are not part of science.”

Mark his words well.

Why do I say this? Because in chapter 4 (pages 44 ff.) in the 1993 booklet mentioned above, a certain Massimo Introvigne, whom I imagine to be the same person who was speaking on the Swiss Radio, wrote:

“Alleanza Cattolica was certainly one of the first Catholic groups in Italy to become aware of the problem [of new religiosity]. It spent many years making every effort, in Italy and abroad, to promote action on all three levels [- the scientific, the pastoral, and the informational -] while at the same time trying to avoid any confusion between such levels [2]. This is why militants of Alleanza Cattolica, together with others, founded and still inspire CESNUR, the Centre for the Study of New Religions [3], which has by now achieved recognition as one of the main international centres for scientific study of new religiosity. And this too is why militants of Alleanza Cattolica are engaged, wherever possible, in Catholic groups involved in study, information, and pastoral action, on a diocesan and national scale; in some quite important dioceses, they are the main animators. Finally, this is why Alleanza Cattolica — under its own name and responsibility — has been promoting hundreds of meetings, seminars and lectures over more than ten years, in order to explain the basic issues of new religious movements in general — and in detail as well, as in the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses — within the framework of an apologetic response, which always goes back to the wider framework of the dramatic struggle between evangelization and anti-evangelization. In other words, to use the language of the counter-revolutionary school of Catholicism which is the special inspiration for Alleanza Cattolica, the struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution (note 35: For the main ideas of this school, see PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, *Rivoluzione e Contro-Rivoluzione*, 3rd enlarged Italian edition [Piacenza: Cristianità, 1977]); the expression of this scenario is one of the main purposes of the association. For several centuries, the overall outline of this scenario has tended to remain the same; however, Alleanza Cattolica tries to follow the modifications of its most specific and concrete aspects through history, focusing its attention from time to time on what appear to be the most serious aspects of anti-evangelization and of the revolution-



ary process. It should not come as a surprise if — as the action of new religious movements increases in intensity and importance, both in terms of quantity and quality within the general framework of obstacles to evangelization — Alleanza Cattolica has increasingly focused its attention on this aspect of the revolutionary process, without forgetting others which are no less worrisome. The tradition of thought that Alleanza Cattolica is based on has always taught that the authentic counter-revolutionary militant is the person who is able to focus on today's Revolution without wasting time fighting yesterday's Revolution — almost as if one felt a paradoxical "affection" for the latter, aware of the fact that the Revolution changes all the time. Having identified a crucial aspect of today's Revolution in the new religious movements of today, Alleanza Cattolica does not limit itself to analyzing this or that scholar, but draws its inspiration — first and foremost — from the indications of the Magisterium of the Church."

Is Introvigne actually telling us that CESNUR was created by militants of Alleanza Cattolica in order to fight the dramatic conflict "between evangelization and anti-evangelization", hence "to use the language of the counter-revolutionary school of Catholicism which is the special inspiration for Alleanza Cattolica, the struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution"? And that a militant is a person who "is able to focus on today's Revolution without wasting time fighting yesterday's Revolution"? Yes, that seems to be exactly what he is saying. Basically, the action of CESNUR Italy seems to be the ideological expression of the counter-revolutionary school of the inspiring father figure of the movement of which Introvigne is a leader, i.e. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, founder of TFP, Tradition, Family and Property [3]. And what is "today's revolution"? Does it have something to do with the secular ideas which arose from "yesterday's revolution"?

In the same booklet, Introvigne also tells us some other interesting things:

"b. Man [who is] in some way "religious" or looking for contact with the sacred — however deviant or even perverse — in the world of new religiosity is not identical with the man who is a victim or promoter of the anti-religious ideologies which the Church had — and, in some parts of the world, still has — as its adversary, and cannot simply be treated in the same way. His "religious" aspiration may contain authentic elements which merit

respect, "seeds of the Word" which — while avoiding any kind of syncretism or relativism — must be helped to mature through dialogue."

Basically, Introvigne is saying that he believes that a person who claims to be "religious", no matter whether he follows a "perverse" or "deviant" group (or, I would add, a group which considers money to be its god, or a group of murderers such as those who recently committed massacres in Uganda), has within himself the "seeds of the Word", that is, the word of God, and must be respected as an individual sensitive to being evangelized. On the contrary, a person who is a "victim or promoter" of "anti-religious ideologies" — which Introvigne elsewhere basically identifies with French secularism, ideas he associates with the "anti-cult movements" — has no hope whatsoever, and cannot be treated in the same way.

So who are the main enemies of evangelization that the good militant must fight against in his Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira-inspired counter-revolution? Certainly not those who have inside them the "seed of the Word", like the Scientologists, the subway gassers in Japan, or the slaughterers of innocent Uganda farmers. No, they are alright. Sooner or later — I suppose the good Alleanza Cattolica/CESNUR militant thinks — we shall evangelize and convert them. Better a RELIGIOUS fanatic than a reasoning NON-BELIEVER, this seems to be Introvigne's idea. The real enemies are the secularists, especially the "anti-cultists", who — according to the CESNUR director, seem basically to be driven by religious intolerance and hatred for religion, and who appear on the website of the Milan diocese as "devils", no less. Of course, anybody who has read Introvigne will have noticed how, and wondered why, he carries out his private war against the "anti-cult movement" everywhere. I think what he wrote in 1993 shows that what Introvigne is conducting is actually a Holy War, one which is basically motivated by his counter-revolutionary ideology.

Now let us go back to his radio interview: "I believe that both these approaches — religionist and ideological, as they are respectively called in social sciences — have a legitimate field of application in the works of polemicists but are not part of science." In brief, Massimo Introvigne is saying that Massimo Introvigne is a polemicist who is not part of science.

Considering what Introvigne said in his 1993 booklet, his answer to the definitive question by the Swiss journalist looks a little "embarrassing":

"CS: Several documents claim that CESNUR is associated with the Catholic traditionalist movement Alleanza Cattolica, which supports cults, not for scientific reasons, but because it fears that the battle against alternative movements could not only overwhelm these religions, but also controversial movements within the Catholic Church associated with Alleanza Cattolica. What is your opinion?

MI: Alleanza Cattolica is a Catholic movement which is recognized in many of the dioceses where it is active. I belong to it. Some of the other hundreds, indeed by now thousands, of scholars who have taken part in CESNUR initiatives, also belong to it. I am the only member of the Board of Directors of CESNUR International who belongs to Alleanza Cattolica. There are three Catholics. The others are Orthodox Christians, Methodists, Calvinists, or simply atheists. So it seems to me ridiculous to present CESNUR as an institution associated with a Catholic movement."

Now that is strange — wasn't it Introvigne himself who in 1993 claimed that CESNUR was created by "militants of Alleanza Cattolica" to join the fight in the "dramatic struggle" between "evangelization and anti-evangelization"? The only questions are 1) how many of the "hundreds, indeed by now thousands" of scholars who took part in CESNUR's initiatives were aware that they were carrying out Introvigne's ideological Holy War, and 2) whether the members of the board of directors are aware of this. In any case, Introvigne clearly does not answer the question, but changes the subject.

## Notes:

1. The interview was then published in full by *Corriere del Ticino*, and subsequently appeared on the website of CRIS Roma.

2. In this same booklet, Introvigne describes these three levels as follows:

"f. An analysis of this phenomenon and its causes must also be the point of departure for properly identifying the actors of pastoral efforts so much needed in this field, without confusing three different levels, which must absolutely not act against each other, but must be harmoniously coordinated:

- the level of scientific study of the phenomenon, where knowledge is still scarce and the number of scholars is not large enough considering the size of the phenomenon; so much so that only



co-operation among Catholic and non-Catholic scholars, bringing together every available scientific and academic skill, can make it possible to make maps which are as accurate as possible in a field where the lack of cartography is one of the first reasons it is difficult to move;

- the level of pastoral intervention into the phenomenon, both by the dissemination of essential information and by concrete help to people with problems: on this level, scientific description will not be enough. Elements of judgement will have to be introduced, in other words actual apologetics; unlike on the first level, co-operation with non-Catholics here must be done only with great caution.

- the level of reflection and hence of dissemination of analyses and hypotheses concerning the role that the phenomenon of new religious movements plays within the wider framework of the obstacles opposing the evangelizing mission of the Church, and of the struggle between the Church and the forces which for various reasons oppose its project of evangelization."

3. Quite curious. On the CESNUR web page <http://www.cesnur.org/about.htm>, but only in the part in English, we read that CESNUR "was established in 1988 by a group of religious scholars from leading universities in Europe and the Americas." So who really founded CESNUR: militants of Alleanza Cattolica or scholars? OR were these scholars themselves militants of Alleanza Cattolica, contradicting what Introvigne told Swiss radio when he said that it seemed "ridiculous to present CESNUR as an institution associated with a Catholic movement"? I think that the scholars who are board members of CESNUR should ask themselves the same question, unless they want to be associated with Alleanza Cattolica.

For further information on CESNUR and all sorts of interesting topics related to NRMs, please see Guidi's "Alessia Website" at: <http://members.xoom.it/xemu>

## "The True Face of the Secret Societies: Inquest into the Mysterious Group of Thebes"

by Serge Faubert

from *L'Événement du Jeudi* (4 November 1993), pp. 44-52

**P**aris, a weekend last May. The few masons present in the locale of the Grand Orient de France (GOF) barely paid attention to the 30 or so people who hurried, early in the morning, toward one of the meeting rooms. The faces passing through the hall were not familiar to them,

but then one cannot know all of the "brothers". In any case, the small group had presented an official authorization form to the custodian bearing the signature of a high-ranking member of the obedience. So why worry about it?

However, there were some who were worried. None of the visitors belonged to the Grande Orient. They were non-masons [*des profanes*]. And what a group of outsiders! Several old veterans of the extreme right, a former Red Brigadist, a respectable Italian university professor closely linked, at the same time, to the Vatican and to French [Catholic] integralists, a leader of a non-governmental organization and activist concerned with children, a Belgian intellectual close to the national-Bolsheviks (the "red-brown" Russians), a sympathizer of Holocaust denier Professor [Robert] Faurisson... And yet the members of the Grande Orient had had a narrow escape. The leader of an extreme right national-Bolshevik organization, due to his sensitivity toward the group, had not come. In contrast to the preceding year in which, during the course of a meeting also held in the Grande Orient, he had made a brilliant presentation on...sexual magic.

Yes, this odd tribunal occupied itself with magic as well. It was its very reason for existence. Its name? The Group of Thebes...[in this context Thebes is a reference to] the capital of the empire of the [ancient Egyptian] Pharaohs... who, to believers in the esoteric tradition, held the secrets of the universe...

A secret society besides, it is said. But the Group of Thebes is not a school of mystery like the others. The originality of this organization is that it gathers together the leaders of occultist groups or personages recognized in the small world of the initiates. A college of chiefs of some sort, whose existence is even more secret than that of the societies they direct...

The linchpin of the group is Rémi Boyer...[An employee of a Swiss non-governmental organization in his thirties who was obsessed with occultism from an early age,] Boyer decided to work toward federating the small world of esotericism...[After holding a couple of meetings and attempting to organize a federation of esoteric grouplets, including New Age cults and chivalric orders, under the rubric Arc-en-ciel (Rainbow), he changed his approach and tried to organize] "another type of structure which, this time, brought together individuals. He worked on this with one of his close associates, Jean-Pierre Giudicelli, the second pillar of the Group of Thebes.

Giudicelli had authority in esoteric circles...He headed the French section of

Myriam, a Luciferian obedience whose teachings made an appeal to the sexual impulses of its adepts...This Corsican was well over forty, a sympathizer of the pro-independence FLNC [Front de Liberation National Corse], and also still a fascist: a former member of Ordre Nouveau, he took part in the neo-fascist group Troisième Voie until the end of the 1980s, and was conspicuous among the advisors of the Front National in Nice after the legislative elections of 1986...[This is in contrast to the politics of Boyer, who is an active supporter of liberal human rights organizations. Boyer defended his collaboration with Giudicelli by insisting that] "that which brings us together is more important than that which divides us"... In short, magic is above politics.

[The three objectives of the Group of Thebes, as set down by Boyer and Giudicelli, were to] "preserve the authentic traditional paths", "verify the effectiveness of initiatic techniques", [and] "intervene in the esoteric scene"...it was a matter of warding off the fanatics of every shade and other disciples in search of gurus. The Group of Thebes wanted to be a club of serious people anchored in tradition and orthodoxy. The Khmer Rouge of alchemy. In order to work in peace, the most absolute secrecy had to be observed: "the group will not function according to the work modalities typical of the profane world (no declared statutes, no bank account opened in its name, no direct interventions)..." Alongside of it a second structure was created: the Circle of Alexandria. An antechamber of the Group of Thebes, it was intended to welcome the candidates and the guests. However, "the Circle of Alexandria's associate members and guests will remain unaware of the name Group of Thebes."

On 3 June 1990, in Paris, the foundation meeting [of the Group of Thebes] was held. Fifteen or so participants attended this first conclave. Among them, a heavyweight: the Italian Massimo Introvigne. This Turinese university professor is the author of a book on magical movements...and director of the Center for the Study of New Religions (CESNUR), an observation post presided over by the Archbishop of Foggia, Monsignor [Giuseppe] Casale. In effect Introvigne is one of the principal leaders of Alleanza Cattolica, a traditionalist community which, while it has remained very close to the Vatican, has long maintained friendly relations with Monsignor Lefebvre.

[Among the respectable participants] were Gérard Kloppel, international grand master of Memphis Misraim lodge, a masonic obedience that claims 7000 members — 1000 in France — who arrived with his wife. The Templars of Circe sent their number two



man, Jean-Marie Vergério. This would be his only appearance, since upon further reflection the Circe Templars preferred to pursue their path separately. With one exception: the chancellor in Greece of the Templar obedience Triantaphyllos, Kotzamanis.

But alongside these honorable erudites or initiates, several less recommendable persons appeared. Like Georges Magne de Cressac — one of the loyalists of Giudicelli, the co-founder of the Group of Thebes — who had participated in the organization of a Robert Faurrison meeting in Limoges on 10 September 1987. Or the Belgian Jean-Marie D'Asembourg. One turns up his name in the patronage committee of the Russian politico-esoteric journal *Milii Angel*. Who is the editor and patron of this journal? Alexander Dugin, the number two man in the Russian National-Bolshevik Front.

However, these two rascals are only small fry [*démi-soldes*] compared to the most controversial figure of the Group of Thebes, Christian Bouchet. A former leader of the *Comités d'Action Republicaines* — a satellite organization of the RPR [Jacques Chirac's neo-Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République] — this Nantes native rejoined Alain de Benoist's GRECE at the beginning of the 1980s, then the extreme right group *Troisième Voie*, headed by Jean-Gilles Malliarakis. A formation which, in spite of its small number of adherents, was always distinguished by its activism and by a discourse which was both anti-American and anti-Soviet. In July 1991, the organization broke apart. Bouchet quit *Troisième Voie* and brought a group of militants along with him.

Several weeks later he founded *Nouvelle Résistance* (NR), a national-Bolshevik organization. His principal adversary: the United States, the incarnation of the capitalist system, which he accused of destroying the identity of peoples. All those who resisted American power and industrial society could thus become potential allies. A profession of faith which has led NR, in addition to its ongoing campaigns against Euro-Disney and McDonald's, to infiltrate [groups of] young ecologists (see *L'Événement du Jeudi* #428) and the Committee for Lifting the Embargo Against Iraq (see *ibid* #463). On the international level, the organization is linked to the Russian National-Bolshevik Front — Bouchet has personally gone to Moscow several times — but also to a myriad of small European "red-brown" groups who have joined together in the European Liberation Front.

How did Bouchet find himself integrated into the Group of Thebes? Quite simply, this history student is one of the most knowledgeable experts on, and biographers of, Aleister Crowley, one of the Popes of esotericism. It is to [Crowley] that he devoted

his master's thesis, which has since been published. An exegete of Crowley, Bouchet is likewise his disciple. He is a member of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO), the obedience founded by the English magician. A group which, by its own admission, has never exceeded fifteen members in France.

Giudicelli, Georges Magne de Cressac, Jean-Marie d'Asembourg, Christian Bouchet...[Perhaps someone will now become alarmed enough to protest.] Professor Massimo Introvigne, for example. But no, the theologian isn't troubled. "One is aware of encountering extremists in that milieu," he explains. "Esotericism demands an absolute commitment, something which is rarely made by politically lukewarm people. Besides, you know," continues the scholar, "I am above all a researcher. For me the Group of Thebes is a marvellous terrain for study." [As for Gérard Kloppel, he is] delighted to count "high-ranking policemen" among the leaders of Memphis Misraim. Certain sources inside the Group of Thebes likewise took account of the presence of a DST [the French equivalent of the FBI] official among the leaders of Memphis Misraim. Without, however, being able to determine if he was or was not on an infiltration mission...

It is therefore not surprising that as the months passed other political fanatics joined the Group of Thebes. Thierry Roche, for example, president in 1988 of the Kemit association, a satellite of GRECE. Or even Paolo Fogagnolo, a former member of the Milanese column of the Red Brigades. After he was incarcerated, the Sefira — the equivalent of the Virgin in the esoteric tradition — appeared before him. It's also true that during this period the revolutionary was observing a prolonged hunger strike...Today the animator of *Radio Popolare*, the station of the Milanese branch of *Rifondazione Comunista*, Fogagnolo heads the *Fraternità Rosa Croce Dorè ed Antica* and its profane branch, the political-philosophical group *Prometeo*. Its purposes: "...to sensitize the masses to the fact that revolutionary communism should be wedded to spiritual sacredness, like Christianity at its origins...to practice alchemy in its diverse aspects...to make a revolution." A vast program.

For its part, the Group of Thebes wishes to be more traditionalist. There one is above all in favor of magic. The "operating groups", i.e., the workshops, multiply. On the menu, "Incantations and Words of Power", "Spiritual Hierarchies", "Angels and Demons", "Magic Wands", "The Dangers of Practical Magic"...Another satellite organization is created: the *Centre International de Recherches et d'Études Martinistes* (CIREM), charged with diffusing those communica-

tions of the group that are accessible to the profane. Its journal, *L'Esprit des Choses*, nevertheless contains some surprises. In issue #4-5, dated Spring 1993, one can find an article entitled "Pensées sur le Christ et le christianisme" which is written by Sri Chinmoy, a guru who flatters himself, among other things, for having written 843 poems in 24 hours, painted 140,000 pictures since birth, and composed 6000 musical pieces...

One also finds the extreme right leader [Bouchet, who appeared at a 1992 CESNUR conference in Paris] at the head of an internal commission called *Tradition et Politis*. Its object: to study the "different models of society which have been proposed by initiatory societies since Antiquity." A workshop whose sessions must have been very animated, since the second coordinator of the group was none other than Paolo Fogagnolo, the former Red Brigadist.

[Roughly translated from the French by Jeff Bale]

## Introvigne: From the Black Mass to the Grand Lodge

by "Father Torquemada"

from *Sodalitium* 38, pp. 44-47

### Introduction

In issue #35 of *Sodalitium* (October-November 1993), I published an article entitled "Massimo Introvigne and Freemasonry". In it, I displayed my own amazement and uneasiness after verifying that the writer, a well-known leader of *Alleanza Cattolica*, collaborator of the daily newspaper of the Italian bishops *Avvenire*, and director of CESNUR (the *Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni*), as well as a former collaborator of GRIS (the [anti-cult] *Gruppo di Ricerca e di Informazioni sulle Sette*), was also in reality a member of the scientific consulting committee of the quasi-Masonic journal *Ars Regia*. In fact, in spite of the [Catholic Church's] conciliar opening vis-à-vis Freemasonry, and the passage of Introvigne from Lefebvrist traditionalism to acceptance of Vatican II, it is always rather striking to see a noted Catholic, at one time a fierce opponent of the lodges, collaborate with Masonry. My amazement was such that, notwithstanding the continual attacks of Massimo Introvigne on the *Istituto Mater Boni Consilii* [publisher of *Sodalitium*], listed by him as being among the current cults, I did not want to believe with my own eyes,



and refused to credit an affiliation between our hero and Freemasonry. Unfortunately, the hero in question did everything in his power to make me believe it again... [here follows a section concerning Introvigne's regular presence, allegedly as a "participant observer", at Satanist black masses, both in Italy and the US, a fact confirmed by Introvigne himself in an interview with Maria Grazia Cutuli ("Il diavolo è fra noi," *Epoca*, 28 September 1993).]

### The Group of Thebes

Sincerely, in spite of the *Epoca* article, I wouldn't have written this new article on Introvigne if I hadn't been mailed a photocopied article from the French newsweekly *L'Événement du Jeudi* (4 November 1993, pp. 44-53), entitled "Le vrai visage des sociétés secrètes" and written by Serge Faubert. It concerned an "investigation of the mysterious Group of Thebes." Group of Thebes? What is the Group of Thebes? Ask the sectologist Massimo Introvigne...

[Here follows the above cited passage concerning the Thebes Group members meeting in the Grand Orient de France]

Permit me to leave the responsibility for what he wrote to Serge Faubert (a well-known leftist), but have you recognized, dear reader, the Italian personage who strolled through the halls of the headquarters of French Masonry? Perhaps the unwarranted title of university professor deceives you, but doesn't the interest in sexual magic signify anything? Yes, it's him again!

"Among them — Faubert writes — was a bigshot: the Italian Massimo Introvigne. This Turin university professor is the author of a work on magical movements (*Il Capello del mago*, partially translated into French as *La Magie*) which serves as a model. Moreover, the director of CESNUR, an organization presided over by the Archbishop of Foggia, Monsignor Casale. In effect Introvigne is one of the key leaders of Alleanza Cattolica, a traditionalist group that, despite being very close to the Vatican, has long maintained friendly relations with Monsignor Lefebvre." (p. 47)

What is our hero doing in the Group of Thebes?

To this question, he replied: "...I am above all a scholar, and the Group of Thebes is for me a marvelous terrain of study." I don't doubt it. In the lodge as in the Satanist

church, Introvigne is above all a scholar, and not an affiliate. And yet...with the lodge as with the Satanist church, there is something that doesn't fit. Not only does the Group of Thebes habitually meet at the Grand Orient de France, but it also qualifies as a secret association about which we have learned only because of an internal disagreement. (cf. p. 51): "Since the group places itself at the service of the most pure tradition — notes an internal document reproduced by Faubert on p. 47 — membership in the group should not appear as a testimonial for an organization or an individual, regardless of who it is." This implies:

- 1) the maximum discretion about the existence of the Group and of its works. It is through its capacity to work in secret that the Group will obtain the efficiency it desires.
- 2) the Group will not function with the work modality typical of the "profane" world (no legal statute, no bank account opened in its name, no direct intervention...)

In sum, even more than Freemasonry itself, the Group of Thebes appears to be a sort of super-Masonry. How is it possible that Massimo Introvigne can frequent the activities of a secret association as a simple scholar, without taking part in them himself?

In fact, according to Faubert, Massimo Introvigne is one of the fifteen or so persons who, on 3 June 1990, founded the Group of Thebes in Paris. (cf. p. 47) And, by means of Introvigne, "two members of the Group of Thebes had been invited to the CESNUR congress in Santa Barbara in 1991, and four had been invited to France in 1992." (p. 50) It is now time to learn more about the group and its members. If Serge Faubert can be trusted, the Group has "a structure whose originality is to gather together the leaders of occultist groups and persons recognized in the small world of the initiates. A sort of college of leaders whose existence is even more secret than the society that leads it." (p. 46) The idea of "federating the small world of esotericism" was apparently that of a certain Rémi Boyer, with whom Introvigne wanted to found a new esoteric journal. (p. 52) Boyer spoke about it with Jean-Pierre Giudicelli, who is closely associated with Corsican separatists but also with right-wing groups and is leader "of the French section of Myriam, a Luciferian obbedience whose teachings concern the sexual impulses (*pulsioni*) of the adepts (Faubert, p. 46)." And then there is [Gérard] Kloppel, "worldwide grand master of the Memphis Misraim lodge", the inevitable Templars, [and] Christian Bouchet, who passed from the

neo-pagan Alain de Benoist's GRECE to become a "member of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), the obbedience founded by the English magician Aleister Crowley (1887-1947), who proclaimed himself "the Great Beast 666"! (p. 48) Bouchet is also a national-Bolshevik, and because of this we should not be amazed by the presence, within this right-wing group, of ex-Red Brigadist Paolo Fogagnolo, who is currently associated with Rifondazione Comunista but also with...the Rosicrucians. It is really true, as Judge Cordova has said, that Freemasonry cuts across all the parties (and also the extra-parliamentary groups).

Now that the Group of Thebes is no longer a secret, what will happen? According to Faubert, it will "continue to function. In order to avoid further leaks of information, a reorganization is currently underway. On the other hand, from its first sessions the group had expected to regularly change its own name in order to hide its tracks. Perhaps the new name that has been selected is that of the secret lodge that united the majority of its members, with the significant exception of Christian Bouchet — the Hermetic Order of the Rosy Cross and of the Rose, the Ordo..." [L'Ordre Hérétique de la Rois Croix et de la Rose, l'Ordo...] (p. 52)

### An Instructive Affair

**I** don't feel that it has been a waste of time to recount, in summary form, the adventures of Massimo Introvigne in Masonic circles. It seems to me that one can draw three very useful conclusions from this.

The first concerns Introvigne himself. Love, said Saint Paul, means "excuse all, have faith in all, hope for all, and endure all (I Cor., 13, 7). With a supreme effort I can still accord the benefit of the doubt to our sectologist, and suppose that he hasn't been initiated into any type of Freemasonry. But the indications are so many and so convergent that doubt is, to say the least, permissible and proper. That he frequents these circles only to study them seems increasingly improbable and, in any case, he has moved far beyond that which is permissible. He would not be the first Catholic researcher of masonry to pass, with the help of the climate created by Vatican II, to the other side (cf. Caprile). I await explanations from Introvigne, and hope that he will have the decency to not move any closer to the cults.

The second concerns the "anti-cult" associations. The appearance does not always conform to the substance. For example, *Secrets et Sociétés*, the journal that violated the secrecy of the Group of Thebes, is itself



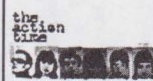
published by an ex-collaborator of GRECE. The congresses of CESNUR have gathered together, among the invitees, some members of the Group of Thebes. Is the cult monitoring organization becoming a screen to hide cultic activities? What does the utterly silent Monsignor Casale think of this?

The third concerns the circles of the so-called "right". In words, hostile to Freemasonry. In reality, very crowded with freemasons or, no matter how, very polluted by masonic ideas. Among the members of the scientific committee of *Ars Regia* we have noted the presence of well-known people such as [Franco] Cardini and Introvigne, who are esteemed both as Catholics and traditionalists. But there is also a certain Emilio Servadio, the father of Italian psychoanalysts and a collaborator of the journal of the Grand'Oriente d'Italia, *Hiram*. Although he is a Jew, in the 1930s he was a member with René Guenon and Julius Evola of the esoteric Group of Ur. Another "group" like that of the Group of Thebes? This would be an interesting path to follow or an interesting debate to open. Wouldn't now be the time to do a bit of intellectual cleansing in certain circles, not excluding our own Catholic circles?

[Roughly translated from the Italian by Jeff Bale]

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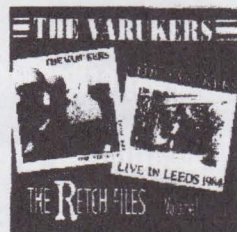
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